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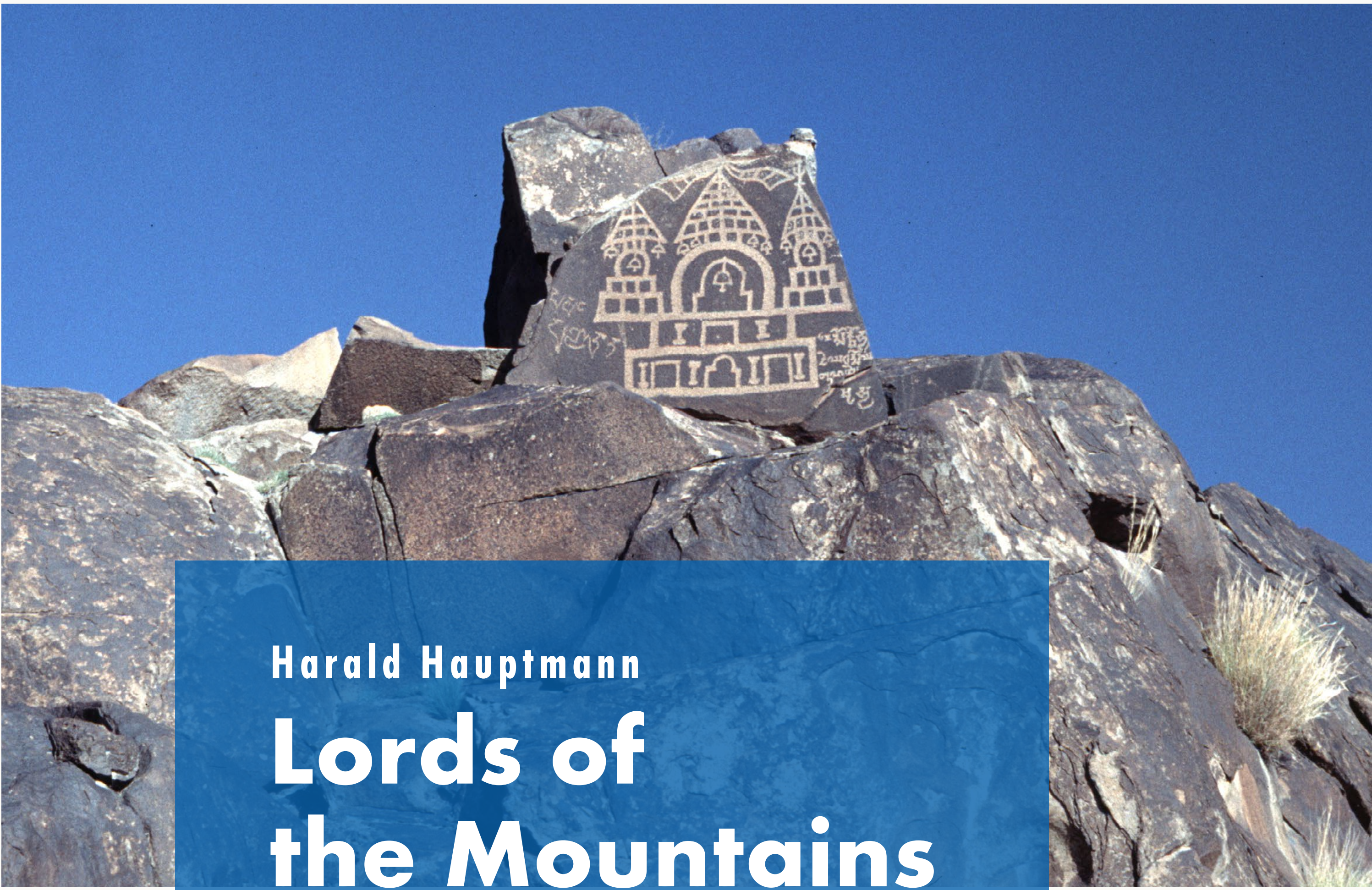

Harald Hauptmann

Lords of the Mountains

Pre-Islamic Heritage along the Upper Indus in Pakistan

Edited by Luca Maria Olivieri

HEIDELBERG
UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING

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Cover illustration: Ensemble of three stupas decorated with bells, carved on a rock at an exposed position on top of a ridge with dedicatory Brāhmī inscriptions; 6th – 7th centuries AD, Thalpan (see Table 25.2).
Fontispice: Harald Hauptmann and his wife Salwa Hauptmann in front of the stupa above Gilgit-Jutial (PGAM).

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Foreword

With his authoritative monograph, *Lords of the Mountains. Pre-Islamic Heritage along the Upper Indus in Pakistan,* Harald Hauptmann brought decades of research in the Karakoram / Karakorum region of northern Pakistan to an impressive conclusion. In a sense, this book is the scientific legacy of the last phase of his career. Unfortunately, he did not live to see it published. As a lover of books, he would certainly have derived special pleasure from holding the finished volume in his hands, as all who knew Hauptmann closely can attest. We may count ourselves fortunate that the book has been successfully completed despite his sudden death in 2018.

His wife Salwa Hauptmann was his constant companion and an important source of support in his Pakistan research work. Indeed, their shared enthusiasm for this culture area evoked the feeling that one was in the presence of kindred spirits. Special thanks are due to the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, which has funded the completion and publication of this work by its longtime member. Luca M. Olivieri of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, who has headed ISMEO's Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat for many years (and still does), kindly took on the editing of this monograph; it could have been in no better hands.

When Harald Hauptmann received his doctorate in 1964, with a thesis on the late Neolithic in Thessaly, he could not really have foreseen where his scientific career would lead him, thematically and geographically. Hauptmann was bold and always ready for an adventure, if it held the promise of exciting research topics that needed answers to questions. His work as a member of the German Archaeological Institute in Istanbul, from 1966 to 1971, had a crucial influence on the course of his scientific career, because it led him away from the Balkan-Aegean world, in which he had hitherto been at home, to the eastern regions of Anatolia.

In the course of major excavations over many years, first at Norşuntepe and then at Lidar Höyük, he won widespread admiration for the standards that he set in carrying out comprehensive archaeological excavations of huge settlement mounds in southeast Anatolia. Moreover, he had only a short window of time at his disposal before these cultural landscapes would disappear underwater behind dams already under construction. With his work in Nevalı Corı and then in Göbekli Tepe, Hauptmann laid the foundations of a completely new assessment of the Pre-Pottery period on the northern periphery of the Fertile Crescent. It was his student Klaus Schmidt († 2014) who not only continued this work, but subsequently also made sensational discoveries at Göbekli Tepe.

Hauptmann followed these successes with great satisfaction, having correctly recognized and predicted the potential of this site. He himself, however, was already much farther to the east in mind and spirit – like Alexander the Great, he was drawn to the Upper Indus River valley. Back in 1980, Karl Jettmar and Ahmad Hasan Dani had begun a large-scale research project there, “Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway, Northern Pakistan,” the purpose of which was to comprehensively document and study the countless specimens of rock art and inscriptions that people from a wide variety of culture areas had left there in almost every period of history. This research unit was based at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences.

In 1989, the question arose of finding a successor to Karl Jettmar for the management of this project. There were not many people who were capable of doing this, because a special set of skills was required in order to conduct field work successfully in the Northern Areas of Pakistan and, at the same time, to run the associated research unit in Heidelberg. The Heidelberg Academy of Sciences turned to its academician Harald Hauptmann, who at the time was still fully occupied with his large projects in southeast Anatolia; nevertheless, he accepted this new responsibility. Did he suspect what lay in store for him? That is a question that only he could answer.

Perhaps he saw it as an opportunity to become acquainted with a completely new culture area and to explore totally different research topics. Despite his close ties to Anatolia, Harald Hauptmann always thought in terms of larger areas that transcended borders; he was interested both in broad patterns and in wide-ranging comparisons. He was particularly fascinated by the idea of opening up an unknown area of research and having the opportunity to get to know a new country and its inhabitants in person. As a scholar, Hauptmann was no loner who kept his discoveries and observations to himself until his next publication came out. He sought to be close to people and to share his knowledge with them, whether in southeast Anatolia or the Northern Areas, and whether they were renowned fellow researchers or the driver of his off-road vehicle in Chilas.

His approach was completely different from that of his predecessor, the Heidelberg ethnologist Karl Jettmar. Jettmar, who first traveled to this region in 1955, was a man of spontaneous, sometimes ingenious ideas, but he also approached his objectives erratically. His field work in the Upper Indus River valley lacked the necessary long-term planning and a correspondingly suitable team. Hauptmann delivered all of this. As an experienced leader of long-term, large-scale research projects, he was used to planning field work carefully. His strategy was to record each individual rock art station systematically, prepare comprehensive documentation of it, and ensure that this was published in catalogue form. He established a new publication series, the “Materials for the Archeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan” (MANP), which brought forth many sizeable volumes, in which all of the material from the sites that he investigated was systematically processed and presented.

Today the Karakoram / Karakorum region, with its rock art and inscriptions, is one of the best documented regions in Central Asia and beyond – and it is therefore highly accessible for research. At times, the seemingly endless presentation of much the same rock art subjects for pages on end was remarked on with amusement. But Hauptmann knew that a selection of motifs would never be anything other than subjective and would have no lasting value to researchers. From the beginning, he aimed to make the best possible use of the time available to him on site and to document as many sites as possible comprehensively. This would form a basis upon which subsequent, more extensive historical and cultural studies could build. The present volume shows that he also saw himself as having a duty in this respect. This book underlines how intensively Hauptmann dedicated himself to communicating knowledge of this region over the years, seeking to understand it and to place it in the context of the neighboring culture regions. As a leader of digs, however, the proper sequence was clear in his mind: first the documentation, then the analysis.

It was not the task of the Heidelberg research unit to conduct excavations. As an archaeologist, Hauptmann greatly regretted this restriction. Of course, he knew perfectly well that the material and personnel resources available to him would not be sufficient for that, and that the documentation of the rock art and inscriptions had to take priority. He also understood, however, that without excavations in this largely unexplored landscape at the intersection of important connecting routes and long-distance highways through the heart of Central Asia, any insights gained into the early history of the region would remain limited. He did not find it easy to drive past pre- and protohistoric settlements and burial grounds, because it was obvious to him that they must have been directly related to the rock art stations. This grew even more difficult for him over the years as illegal excavations became more common, destroying more and more of these sites for ever.

That was when I became involved. Hauptmann could not conduct any excavations himself, but he could try to get other people interested in the region. The Eurasia Department of the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, which I was in charge of at the time, was running various research projects however, that without excavations in this largely unexplored landscape at the intersection different parts of Central Asia and Siberia. The Karakorum region on the southern route of the Silk Road, leading into the Indus Valley, was of great interest, because the known artefacts unearthed in illegal excavations and haggled over in the bazaars of Chilas and Gilgit indicated that there had been far-reaching, long-distance connections to different parts of Central Asia and Siberia.

I shall never forget a visit to the Karakorum Highway in the spring of 1998, during which Hauptmann sought to awaken my enthusiasm for the region – and succeeded. This initial trip was followed by another; a promising site was selected and arrangements were made to investigate it together with the Pakistani partner responsible for the Northern Areas. The work was supposed to start in September 2001, but then came September 11 and the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, which changed things everywhere, including northern Pakistan. After the interruption, Hauptmann was able to resume his field work in the Karakorum region, but conducting excavations was now out of the question. The megalithic tomb selected for investigation with Hauptmann's help has since been looted and totally destroyed. Furthermore, we still do not know what period these structures can be dated to and what culture they can be assigned to.

Hauptmann was an important archaeologist, a brilliant excavator with an extraordinary feel for special places. He had a sure instinct and diplomatic skill, coupled with daring and tenacity. With this combination of traits, he often achieved what others thought to be impossible. He always felt great respect and affection for his host country, whether in Turkey or

Pakistan, yet he always maintained a certain distance and never ingratiated himself. For many of his colleagues, Hauptmann was first and foremost an irrepressible excavator who could happily stay in the field for months. This book offers us another side of Harald Hauptmann: someone who has ventured and achieved a great synthesis of his vast store of knowledge.

Hermann Parzinger

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to the people who have helped to bring the manuscript of my unexpectedly deceased husband Prof. Dr. Harald Hauptmann, to be published. They include Prof. Dr. Rainer Michael Boehmer, Prof. Dr. Joseph Maran and Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels for constant support. My gratitude to Prof. Dr. Luca M. Olivieri for his invaluable help to edit the manuscript and for continued friendship, Martin Bemmann for his support and compilation of the images, Dr. Emily Schalk for her willingness to proofread the English, and Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger for the kindness of writing the preface.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Without their support this book would have not come to be published.

Salwa Hauptmann

Note of the Editor

In consultation with Salwa Hauptmann and in agreement with colleagues in Heidelberg, the study has been preserved in the form in which Harald Hauptmann [HH] left it. Stylistic interventions were limited to correcting factual errors, eliminating repetitions forgotten in HH's last revision, and those that the linguistic revisers "imposed" for a better rendering of HH's thought. The structure of the text has therefore not been changed, the illustrative apparatus has remained the one chosen by HH, and taken care here by Martin Bemmann. The contents of the study have remained the same, only a few points that were left open were integrated.

For Buddhist terminology and architecture, I referred to Faccenna – Filigenzi 2007, Faccenna – Spagnesi 2014, Hinüber 2016, Olivieri 2022a. Terms largely used (see Griffiths 1981), as for example stupa and jātaka, were not italicized (unless jātaka is part of a title); stupa is spelled without a diacritic, unless it is within quotations. Most archaeological regions and sites are also written without diacritics (e.g. Gandhara, Swat, Sanchi, Mathura, etc.). In order to update the structure of the text, centuries are expressed in numerals (ordinals), and not in Roman numerals (as sometimes used by HH), while it was decided to keep the notations B.C. and A.D. as it was in the manuscript. Abbreviations for Classic sources follow the indications of Oxford Dictionary of Classics.

In very few cases, where necessary, I have modified or arranged the chapter headings differently. However, the structure of the book has not been changed. In addition, it was my decision not to include the chronological table prepared by HH to accompany the volume, because many changes have already been proposed and some dates are newly agreed upon by scholars. It must also be said that the dates proposed in the text respond to almost consistent and updated criteria, to the extent that I thought the chronological table was written before HH reached the final draft of his manuscript (2018), and never revised by him. This is another element that encouraged me to expunge the chronological table from the present edition.

I also decided not to overload the work with the index apparatus (names, placenames, etc.), which would have been excessively long, considering the nature of the book. Instead, I considered it useful to keep the index of rock-art sites surveyed by the Pakistani-German Archaeological Mission led by HH (who also compiled the index). This index is also user-friendly thanks to the cartographic apparatus prepared by Martin Bemmann.

Any additions, or comments, where made necessary by new discoveries and studies, are inserted as footnotes and marked by +, and [+ …]. Bibliographical references in editorial notes are merged with the general bibliography. As will be clear from the low number of editorial notes, HH's work presented here, which corresponds to the 2018 last draft, was already completed and well updated in terms of bibliography. For further bibliographical updates on the Hindukush region, the reader may eventually refer to *Cultures of the Hindukush after Jettmar. A Bibliography* (Cacopardo 2022).

For a recent bibliography on the languages of Northern Pakistan, the reader may refer to the *Bibliography of Languages of Northern Pakistan* (Baart – Baart-Bremer 2001). Finally, it should be noted that HH had annotated some bibliographical references on the manuscript, that are not included in the text he left us. For the sake of completeness, these references are marked with an asterisk in the Bibliography.

The proverbial accuracy of HH can never be replaced by the effort of an editor. Certainly, the book would have deserved to be read again by the author, the drafts carefully reviewed over and over again with the watchful eye of the one who thought up the structure, the contents, the nuances of each page. Therefore, the book will be less complete than HH would have liked, but I hope he would have appreciated, and with him the reader, the effort to bring to publication what I can simply define a masterpiece of depth of erudition and of historical vision.

Luca M. Olivieri

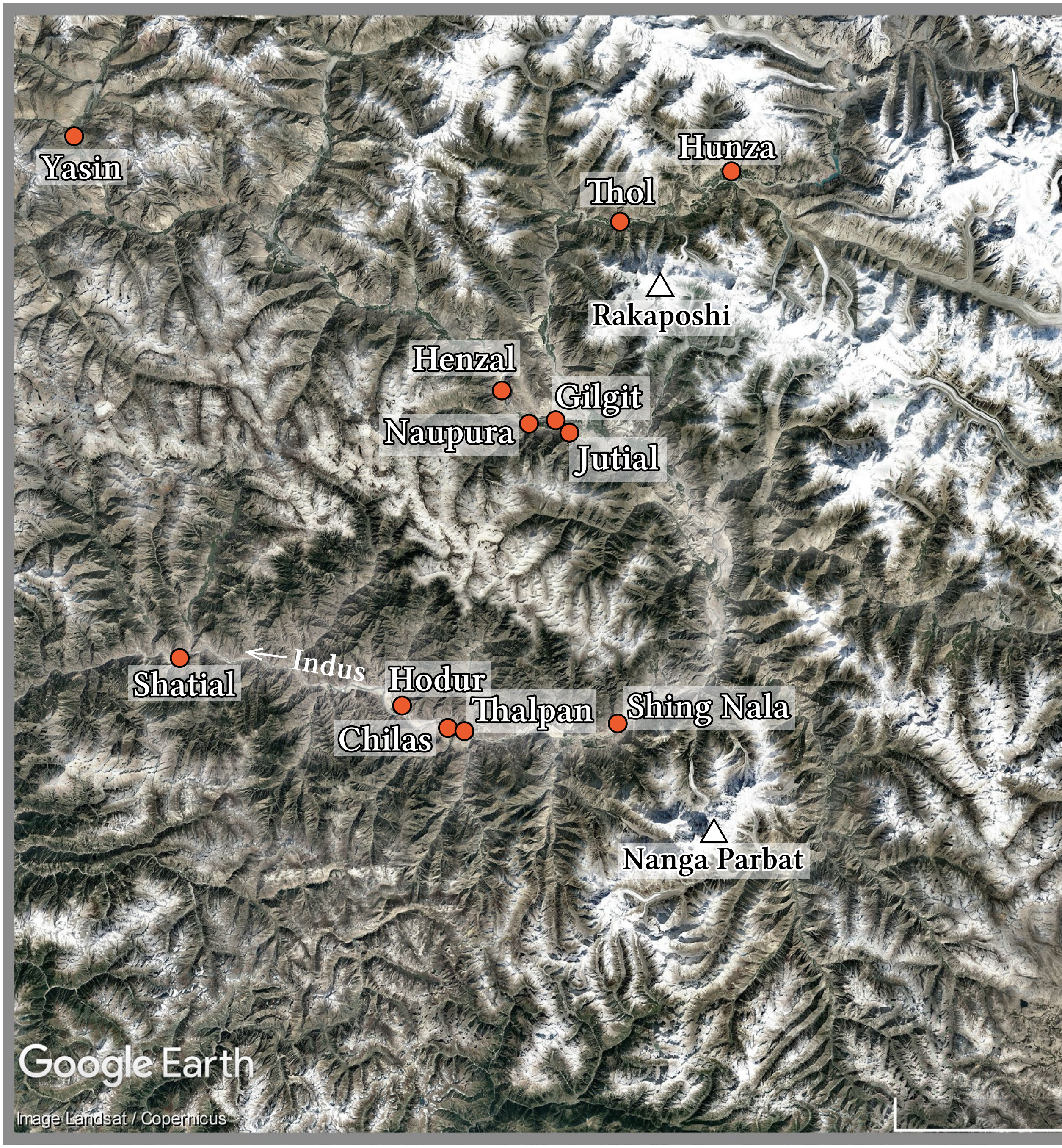
Editorial Abbreviations

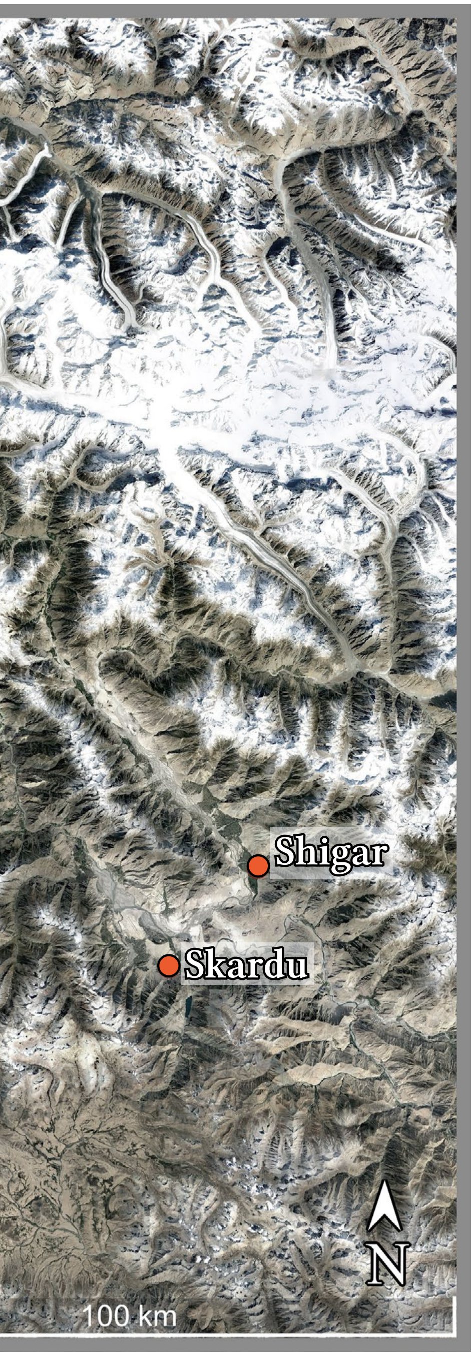
AKCSP Aga Khan Culture Service
ANP Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies
DoAM Department of Archaeology & Museums, Government of Pakistan
DFG German Research Foundation [Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft]
DG Director General
HH Harald Hauptmann
KKH Karakorum Highway
KIT Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
KP Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
MANP Materials for the Archaeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan [Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans]
NWFP North-West Frontier Province
PGAM Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas
TH University of Karlsruhe
PNCA Pakistan National Council of the Arts
WAPDA Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority

Classic sources

Ael. *NA* Aelianus *De natura animalium*
Arr. *Anab.* Arrian *Anabasis*
Arr. *Ind.* Arrian *Indica*
Ctesias [Phot., *Bibl.*] Ctesias *Indica//Persica* = Photius *Bibliotheca*
Curt. Curtius Rufus *Historiae Alexandri Magni*
Dio Chr. *Or.* Dio Chrysostomus *Orationes*
Diod. Sic. Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca historica*
Dionys. Per. Dionysus Periegeta *Oikoumenes periegesis*
Hdt. Herodotus *Historiae*
Plin. *HN* Plinius *Naturalis historia*
Plut. *Mor.* Plutarch *Moralia*
Ptol. *Geog.* Ptolemaeus *Geographia*
Strab. Strabo *Geographica*

Map of Major Rock-Art and Other Historical Sites in the Upper Indus Region


Yasin
Hunza
Thol
Rakaposhi
Henzal
Gilgit
Naupura
Jutial
Indus
Shatial
Hodur
Thalpan
Shing Nala
Chilas
Nanga Parbat
Google Earth
Image Landsat / Copernicus


Shigar
Skardu
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100 km

Preface

This study is dedicated to the memory of
Karl Jettmar (Vienna, 1918 – Heidelberg, 2002)
and Ahmad Hasan Dani (Basna, Rajpur 1920 – Islamabad, 2009)
to whose work all scholars of archaeology and
history of the Northern Areas are deeply indebted.

The project 'Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway, Northern Pakistan' as a joint Pakistani-German research project was inaugurated by the ethnologist Karl Adam Jettmar (1918–2002) and the archaeologist Ahmad Hasan Dani (1920–2009) as his official counterpart in 1980. The first field season in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, since 2009 renamed in Gilgit-Baltistan, started on behalf of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and was sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Volkswagen Foundation. As an independent research department, it was established at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in 1984, supported jointly by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Baden-Württemberg in the frame of the 'Academy Programme'. The fieldwork of the 'Pak-German Study Group for Anthropological Research in the Northern Areas' was organized by Volker Thewalt between 1980 and 1988. In 1989 the directorship of the research department at the Academy and of the re-established 'Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas' (PGAM) was handed over by Jettmar to the author. The presidents of the Heidelberg Academy, particularly Albrecht Dihle, Gisbert Freiherr zu Putlitz, Peter Graf Kielmansegg and Hermann H. Hahn, showed a keen interest in the research project. The main aim of the project since 1989 was to attain a systematic documentation of all archaeological monuments, particularly of the rock carvings and inscriptions along the ancient routes in the lower part of the Upper Indus River valley between Shatial in Indus Kohistan, part of the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP, formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province, NWFP), and Raikot in the Diamar District, but also in the other regions in the northern part of Gilgit-Baltistan, in the Gilgit District, Punial, Ishkoman, Yasin, Hunza and in Baltistan. The mapping and cataloguing of the rock carving sites, the ancient monuments and routes along the Upper Indus were undertaken by members of the Institute of Geodesy at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the former University of Karlsruhe (TH). The original challenge for the team, the reconstruction of the habitation history since the early Holocene, which only could be achieved by systematic archaeological excavations of selected ancient sites, could however not be realized. A special permit for such an excavation program unfortunately was guaranteed at least in 2006 before the end of the field activities. The last field campaign in Diamer District took place in 2012, when in accordance to the closing of the research department at the Heidelberg Academy the since 1988 established expedition camp at Chilas was finally also given up. Final field researches were made in 2013 in Baltistan in cooperation with Ernst Pohl of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University, Bonn, and supported by the Gerda Henkel foundation.

First of all the project is obliged to the Ministry of Culture of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to the Department of Archaeology & Museums, Government of Pakistan (DoAM) in Karachi and Islamabad for guaranteeing the licence to undertake archaeological field researches in the high mountain region. The mission is grateful for the support of the different director generals of the DoAM, Dr. Muhammad Ishtiaq Khan, director of the Department of Antiquities & Museums since 1974, and appointed as director general since 1980 until 1986, DG Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan 1987–1994, DG Dr. Muhammad Rafique Mughal 1994–1996, DG Mr. Niaz Rasool 1996–1998, DG Mr. Saeed-ur-Rehman 1998–2003, and DG Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar 2003–2012.

The Department of Archaeology and Museums in Islamabad was devolved on 31 March 2011, and the responsibility for archaeological sites and museums was handed over to the provincial governments. Its sub-regional office in Gilgit, placed under the Ministry of Tourism, has since then been supervised by the regional government of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Karl Jettmar always with gratitude remembered his friends who supported his anthropological field researches in the Northern Areas since his first stay there in 1955: Rhabar Hassan from Hunza, the former chief of the porters for the early German Nanga Parbat expeditions and later Deputy Superintendant Police in Gilgit, acted as guide and interpreter during his first field researches. The lawyer Ghulam Nabi accompanied him during his studies in Brokpa villages of East Baltistan. His personal highest esteem during this period was held for Shahzada Hussam-ul-Mulk, prince of Chitral and former governor of Drosh, who disclosed to him the rich past of Chitral, and also for Hussain-ul-Mulk (1977). Mohammad Ismail Khan, 1955 Assistant Political Officer in Darel and Tangir, and since 1973 Deputy Commissioner of the Diamer District in Chilas, showed him, then retired, the most spectacular rock carving sites downstream up to Shatial in autumn 1979. During his anthropological research in Baltistan and in other regions of Gilgit-Baltistan since 1978 he was accompanied by his student Adam Nayyar, who finished his doctorate at the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg.

The author remembers the occasional support by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Islamabad, especially under its ambassadors Jürgen Kleiner and Hans-Joachim Daerr. Their attachés Matthias Kiesler and Patrick Heinz showed keen interest in raising awareness for the endangered archaeological monuments along the Upper Indus by organizing exhibitions and seminars in Islamabad. The great exhibitions of 1997 and 2009 at the National Art Gallery of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad, the last entitled ‘Talking Rocks along the KKH, Northern Pakistan – Unfolding a magnificent chapter of human evolution through centuries’, again referred to the rich cultural heritage under threat of the future dam constructions along the Upper Indus River Valley. As a result of these endeavours ‘The Petroglyphs in the Diamer-Basha Dam Area, Northern Areas, Pakistan’ were included by the World Monuments Fund in New York in the list of the ‘2010 Worlds Monuments Watch’. The ‘Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority’ (WAPDA) in Lahore, particularly

Mr. M. Shakil Durrani, chairman until 2012, supported a conservation program for the most important rock images and the installation of a local museum at the former British Fort of Chilas. The PGAM is also grateful to various local authorities of the Diamer District in Chilas Tehsil and of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan in Gilgit.

The cooperation with the Aga Khan Culture Service (AKCSP) in Gilgit, especially with Fazal Karim (by Salman Beg), stimulated the project also in building up an archive of historical monuments.

The results of the earlier Pak-German Study Group between 1980 and 1988 have been published in numerous articles by Jettmar and in special studies and editions by his epigraphists Gérard Fussman, Collège de France in Paris, and Oskar von Hinüber, also in the special series 'Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies' (ANP). The additional reading of the inscriptions in Middle Iranian languages during the early years of the project is owed to Helmut Humbach and for the final publications to Nicholas Sims-Williams, School of Oriental and African Studies at London, and the reading of the Chinese and Tibetan graffiti to Thomas O. Höllmann and Klaus Sagaster respectively. The results of the systematic field research of the later 'Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas' (PGAM) since 1989 were presented in the final publication series 'Materials for the Archaeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan' (MANP).

Photographs and drawings, when not otherwise stated, are property of the research department, kept in the Rock Art-Archive of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Prologue

The classical world linked with India the imagination of a fairyland entwined with singular fertility, fabulous wealth and legendary marvels (Ctesias [Phot. *Bibl.*] 46b 35), forming the remote outskirts of the known cosmos bordered by the world's girdle, the ωκεανός. The geographical conception of Herodotus's universal history from 560 to 479 BC by determining the view of life in antiquity described India as the easternmost part of the oikumene (Hdt. III, 98–104; IV, 40). The Karian historian Herodotus was a citizen of Halikarnassos, which was then a part of the Persian Empire. There he was able to meet merchants and sailors from the vast empire to learn from their adventures and travel experiences. He refers to the narratives of Skylax of Caryanda, who by order of the Great King Dareios I travelled from Kaspatyros in Paktyia downstream the Indus and from a harbour around its delta westward to South Arabia as far as the Red Sea to Egypt (Hdt. IV, 44). His expedition may have been connected with Dareios' conquest of this part of India around 520–518 BC. Even in later literary descriptions of the known world such as by Pliny the Elder, who lived between 23 to 79 AD, India encompassed the shape of a rectangle bordered by the Indus in the west, by the Imaus, the Himalayas, in the north, and by the ocean in the east and south (Plin. *HN* VI, 56). Herodotus still followed in his conception of its geographical setting the early Hellenistic ideas about the subcontinent as created by Eratosthenes and Megasthenes in the 3rd century BC. He thus ignored the observations of later Greek merchants and sailors as described in the famous *Periplus Maris Erythraei* written by an anonymous author around the middle of the 1st century AD[1] The account reports on the maritime trade routes from the Red Sea to India.[2]

The view of the fabled land and the world beyond was fundamentally changed by a world-shaking event, the campaign of the Macedonian king Alexander against the Persian Empire. The march across the Hellespont in 334 BC was propagated as a "Pan-Hellenic or national crusade" to atone the heinous deeds of the Persian invaders against Greek sanctuaries during the war of conquest under the great kings Dareios I and Xerxes I (between 490–479 BC).[3] This act of revenge to break the predominance of the declining Persian power in Asia should lead him "in his dreams of Homeric glory" even beyond the borders of the subjugated empire of Dareios III Kodomannos, the last Achaemenid king. For Alexander the Great his daring advance from Bactria across the Hindukush to the Indus between 327 and 325 BC implied not only the realization of his destination India, but with reaching the end of the known eastern world he also strived after the world's supremacy in a first step. Alexander's endeavours aimed at the supremacy in the most eastern satrapies Ga(n)dara, Gandhara and Hinduš (i.e. Sindh), which had been included in the Achaemenid Empire by the great kings Kyros II and Dareios I since the 6th century BC. During his campaigns in Sogdiana Alexander must have crossed caravan routes that led to China, the later trans-Asian Silk Route. Here in 328 BC he came also for the first time in contact with the legendary land India, when Taxiles, rājā of Taxila, paid homage to the Macedonian by sending a legation to Sogdiana challenging him to a campaign across the Indus against the rich princedoms, particularly that of the mighty Indian king Poros (Diod. Sic. XVII 86,4). On his march from Baktra (Balkh) in Bactriana, the former seat of the Achaemenid satrap, through the Khawar Pass in the Hindukush (Paropamisos) to Gadara, Alexander crossed the Kunar River (Choes or Choaspes), and entered the valleys of the Aspasians and the Assakenians into the two provinces of the Gandhara kingdom, Souastene and Goruaia or Goryene, modern Swat and Bajaur, and at least reached the territory called *Daedala* (Curt. XIII 10.19). This region – its name recalling that of the Dadikai – is said to have been inhabited by Dards. The kosmokrator must have had knowledge about this tribe, the Dadikai, who closely associated with Gandharans provided a contingent in Xerxes' I army during his last unsuccessful campaign against Greece in 480/479 BC, which ended in his defeat at Plataiai and Mykale (Hdt. VII 66). But, contrary to the other foreign combatants serving in the same regiment, such as Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians and Gandharans, the Dadikai are neither mentioned in Achaemenid inscriptions nor represented on the bas-reliefs of Persepolis or on the royal tombs at Naqš-i Rustam. Their absence in Persian records is noticeable, because next to the other tributary Sattagydians, Gandharans and Aparytae the Dadikai are connected to the seventh *dahyu*-satrapy in the empire of Dareios I (Hdt. III 91), which had to raise alone 170 talents as tribute. The name of the Daradas is listed along with the Gandharans (and Kashmirians?). The homeland of the "mountaineer Indians" comprised the mountain region flown through by the upper course of the Indus River in the north and east of Gandhara.

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[1] Casson 1989.

[2] + On the Periplus, see De Romanis 2020 and Seland 2010. On the eastern Persian satrapies (discussed below), the most authoritative contribution to date is that of Callieri 2023.

[3] Droysen 1877, 24, 33. The propagated reasons for the revenge campaign is discussed by Seibert 1988.

The geographical "Gandarai" after the classic sources, the Philostratean description of Apollonius of Thiana's travel to Taxila, circumscribes an area from the lower valley of the Kabul River, the Cophene, in the west to the Indus River in the east, from the northern fringes of the Swat in the north to the Kohat Mountains in the south.

There are two royal centres in Gandhara. One is the capital Gandhavati (Puṣkalāvatī or Puṣkarāvatī in Sanskrit), Peukelas and Poklais (after Ptol. *Geog*. VII, 1, 44) of the Greek sources near present-day Charsadda, in the province along and north of the Kabul River, named Peukelaotis, Peukolaïtis. The other is Takṣaśilā in Sanskrit form, Taxila in Greek sources. Later the centre of the historical region became Puruṣapura (modern Shah-ji-ki Dheri near Peshawar).[4]

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[4] McCrindle 1901, 115–121; Tarn 1951, 237–238. [+ For an update view on the ancient geography of these regions see Rapin 2017, Rapin – Grenet 2018, Coloru – Olivieri 2019. For an update on the information from the Achaemenid administrative documents, see Henkelmann 2017].

I Geography and Explorations

1 'Where three Empires Meet': Gilgit-Baltistan, the Former Northern Areas of Pakistan

The Northern Areas, synonymous for the Gilgit Wazarat and colonial Gilgit Agency and Baltistan and federally administered by the central government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, cover an area of 70 332/72 971/72 496 km². Curiously, this part of Pakistan has been designated also during the Buddhist time as "northern region", *Uttarāpatha*, as witnessed by an inscription from Shing Nala (73:1) with *iha uttarāpathe*, 'here in the north' [Map]. Even more definitively the designation is repeated by an inscription at Thalpan (373:110) "Śri Buddhalabdha travels here in the north" *(śri [bu]ddhalabdha vicarati iha utarāpathe).*[1]

The autonomous region, renamed as "Gilgit-Baltistan" in 2009 (henceforth also as G-B), comprises the eight districts of Astor, Diamer, Ghizer, Gilgit and Hunza-Nager under the Gilgit division, and Ghanche, Kharmang, Shigar and Skardu in the Baltistan division [Map].[2] The Hindukush-Karakorum region stretching from western Kohistan (i.e. mountain land), Nuristan (Kafiristan) and Chitral District to the Shina-Burusho-speaking area around Gilgit and Diamer with eastern Kohistan, but excluding Baltistan and Kashmir (Kaśmīr), has been labelled also with the poetical nickname Peristan, the "land of the *pari*" or "fairies' land".[3] The region of today's Baltistan refers to the toponym Baltī used by Central Asian historiographers, while it was designated as Little or Lesser Tibet *(Tibbat-I khurd)* in Moghul and Kashmiri chronicles of the 16th and 17th century. Baltistan embedded in the ranges of the Karakorum in the upper reaches of the Indus River covers an area of around 26,200 km². The region, before 1948 a part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, is divided into the administrative districts of Kharmang, Khaplu, Shigar, Skardu and Rondu with its administrative centre Skardu. The estimated population of Gilgit-Baltistan comes up to the number of nearly one million and represents a multi-ethnic society.[4]

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[1] + MANP 4 (204, Taf. 93, 73:1); MANP 9 (177, Taf. 92, 373:110).

[2] For a description of the Gilgit Agency, see: Lawrence 1909, 105–113; India Intelligence Branch 1907; Dani 2001, 15–21. Kreutzmann 2008. For Baltistan, see: Lawrence 1909, 101–105. [+ On the Wakhan corridor and the "Great Game" see Kreutzmann 2017; on Hunza, see Kreutzmann 2020].

[3] The term was coined by two Italian ethnographers who worked for a long time for the IsMEO and IsIAO in Chitral (Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 13–22). [+ On this topic, see the recent contributions of several authors published in Cacopardo – Cacopardo eds 2023].

[4] The population in G-B comprised in 1981 the total of 57,4543 and in 1998 the number of 87,0347. According to the Census of 1901 the Wazarat Gilgit of the Kashmir State contained 264 villages, and the population of 60,885 persons (Lawrence 1909, 107).

A mythical land called Dardistan occurs in the literature. In colonial times the whole mountain region west of the Indus River as far as Afghanistan was summarized under the legendary term as ‘Yaghistan’, “the land of the free” or “the land of ungovernable savages”. The region east of the Indus was seen as part of Kashmir. Gottfried Wilhelm Leitner identified the Yaghi as Dards, the possible descendants of the Daradae or Dardai of the classical descriptions and the Daradas of the Sanskrit literature. The toponym Daraddes’a occurs in the *Rājataranginị̄*, a chronicle of the “Kings of Kaśmīr”, which was written by the scholar and poet Kalhaṇa in the 12th century.[5] Darat-puri, ‘the town of the Dards’, was the residence of its rulers, which has been located at the modern place Gurez in the upper Kishanganga Valley.[6] Their settlements in a region around the Upper Kishanganga and its tributaries seem to have formed a little kingdom, which according the Chronicle was called Daraddes’a.

The toponym ‘Dardistan’ was ascribed to G. W. Leitner, who would have introduced it as an ethnographic term,[7] but it was mentioned earlier in the Tarikh-i Badakhshan of 1801 that “Chitrar was a part of Dardistan” (Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 22). Yet several travellers report “that the people of Kashmir vaguely call the mountain region to their north-west Dardistan, and the Gurairi and Astori call it Daristan. Daristan is then nothing more than Kohistan, or Highlands” (Tanner 1881, 294). The name Dardistan has been applied to a wide region, “which embraces Chitral on the west, including Yasin, the Gilgit valley from Gakuch in Punyal to the Indus at Bunji, Hunza and Nagar to the north, the Shin republic of the Indus valley as far as Sazin to the south, the Kohistan I Malazai, and a portion of the Indus valley, Kohistan”.[8] It was John Biddulph, who emphasized that Leitner had fallen “into the error of believing that the tribes which he has classed under the name of Dard are all of the same (Aryan) race, and he has applied the term of Dardistan, a name founded on a misconception, to a tract of country inhabited by several races, speaking distinct languages, who differ considerably amongst themselves”.[9]

Algernon Durand too called this geographical term “a misleading title, for there is no such country as Dardistan, and there is no one united race to which the name of Dard could be applied” and therefore “the name has no scientific value”.[10]

The geographical term Yaghistan became known during the British colonial administration of the 19th century as the vast ‘land of the ungovernable’ between Kashmir and the border of Afghanistan,[11] including the kingdoms of Gilgit, Yasin, Hunza, Chitral with the southern tribal regions of Kohistan between Chilas and Hazara [Map]. In later geographical descriptions

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[5] Stein 1900, II 505.

[6] Stein 1899, 101, 150, 157. The strategical position of Gurez (Gurais) in the north of Kashmir with its fort is described by Bates 1873, 198–200.

[7] Leitner 1893. Leitner was also the first to begin the study of Dard languages.

[8] Durand 1894, 665.

[9] Biddulph 1880, 8–9.

[10] Durand 1894, 665–666.

[11] Keay 1979, 14–15.

Yaghistan is called ‘Land of the Free’, ‘Land of the Rebels’, or ‘the abode of lawless’, which comprises a more restricted region of the valley communities in the south of the Gilgit chains with Gor, Chilas, Darel, Tangir and Kohistan, but also including the Pathan tribal areas of Dir, Swat, Buner and Hazara.[12] The valleys on both sides of the Indus gorges including the valleys opposite Tangir and Darel, as central part of ‘Yaghistan’, with their administrative centres at Gumari and Jaglot remained independent during the whole period of British domination in the Northern Areas. These Shinaki or Shinkai republics, the “Land of the Shins”, consist of communities comprising few villages, ruled by their continually rivalling elders or headmen and should rather be called pseudo-republics.[13] They remained outside of the Pax Britannica until the new political situation of the Second World War with the chance for the Wali of Swat to expand their sphere of influence as far as the Indus Valley by taking the fortified township on its west bank, Pattan. The side valley Kandia up to Seo was also included.

More than 25 languages belonging to four main groups are spoken in the high mountain area.[14] They can be divided in two main linguistic groups, the Dardic languages, such as Shina, which half of the indigenous inhabitants of Gilgit-Baltistan speaks, and the non-Dardic idioms. Of the eastern Dardic languages Shina is widest spoken in an area from Palas and Jalkot in Kohistan to Gilgit, farther to the north along the Gilgit River, in the Ishkoman Valley, and in Astor. In eastern Baltistan a valley occupied by the immigrated *Brokpa*, the ‘highlanders’, belongs to this linguistic province. In the side valleys of the Indus River, such as Darel and Tangir, and on its left bank downstream as far as the tributaries Palas and Alai Shina dialects are spoken. Varieties of Kohistani, also called Maiyan, are spread on the right side of the Indus River from the side valleys of Kandia downstream to Duber.[15] Phalura is spoken in southern Chitral. The other Dardic language Khowar, the main language of Chitral, is widespread in Yasin. To the non-Dardic idioms belong Wakhi, an Iranian language, which is spoken in Chitral, but also in the upper valleys of Ishkoman and Hunza. The lower caste of the Doms, who are known as musicians and smiths, have their own language as in Hunza and Nager called Domaaki, an idiom of the the middle-Indian language branch. Smaller groups live among Shina- and Burushaski-speaking communities. Both idioms have influenced this in the core Indo-Iranyan language.

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[12] Lorimer 1939, 17; Jettmar 1960b, 120; Id. 2002, 45–46; Dani 2001, 270. After Curzon 2012, (14, 232, 241–242) Yaghistan corresponds with Kohistan, “where for hundreds of years, either in the valley of the Indus or in the lateral ravines, lawless and savage communities have retained an independent existence, a scourge to each other and a terror to their neighbours” [+ *loc. vacat*].

[13] Curzon 2012, 232.

[14] An overview is given by Fussman (see Dani 2001). For a map showing the district-wise spread of the different idioms, see Kreutzmann 2006, 264–265 fig. 18.5 and Id. 2013, 32 fig. 14. On the Burúśaski language, see: Lorimer 1935–1938; Berger 1992 and 1998; Buddruss 2006, 236–238. On the languages of the Chitral section of the Hindukush, see Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001. [+ New data on Burúśaski are provided by a series of articles published by I. Čašule on several journals (e.g. *Acta Orientalia, JAC*). On the linguistics of the region see the recent monumental study published by C.P. Zoller (Zoller 2023)].

[15] Jettmar 1983b, 505–508 with map showing the distribution of the Dardic languages.

The archaic Burushaski (Burúśaski) is spoken in two dialects by more than 100,000 people in the high valleys of Hunza-Nagar.[16] Burushaski is not related to any other language in the mountain region and retained is distinctive character until the last century, surrounded by Iranian, Indo-Iranian, Tibetan and Turkic languages. A third slightly more diverged dialect, spoken by smaller groups in the valleys of Gilgit and Yasin, belongs to this isolated language group. The history and origin of the Burúśo are in the dark and their genetic links are still shrouded in mystery, since they themselves have no written or even oral tradition about their ancient past. The speakers call themselves Burúśo, who belong to an autochthonous ethnic group of the mountain area or go back to an antecedent stratum of early immigrants from High Asia.

Balti, an archaic proto-Tibetan language, the most extreme north-western extension of the Tibeto-Burman language, is spoken in Baltistan. A small group of nomadic herdsmen, the Gujars, originating from the Indian plains, speak their own language called Gujari. After vast areas of the Punjab were transformed since the second half of the 19th century into canal colonies, the grazing grounds of the Gujari were restricted to a large extent. In the search for new pastures the nomads were forced to migrate to the northern mountain areas, where they found new grazing grounds in Chitral, Swat, around Chilas and Gilgit, and in neighbouring valleys such as Ishkoman and Yasin.

The social stratification of the inhabitants in the relevant part of the Upper Indus valley and its side valleys such as Darel and Tangir has been discussed since the first studies about the Northern Areas, especially by Frederick Drew, John Biddulph and Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner. During his stay in September 1866 at Bunji, Leitner, an Austrian in British service, had the opportunity to interview a landlord of Chilas.[17] Therefore, his accounts particularly about the Chilasis are more trustworthy than the pejorative verdicts by other authors about this stubborn Dardic community.

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[16] At first, the language Burúśaski was known only by a few unreliable lists of words, noted by Cunningham 1854, 398–418 and by Hayword 1871, until Leitner in 1880 presented a first grammar of the Nager dialect. Lt.-Col. David L. R. Lorimer (1876–1962), an army officer in the Political Department, British Colonial India, and Political Agent at the Gilgit Agency between 1920 and 1924, produced his linguistic analysis of the enigmatic Burushaski after his retirement in 1926 during the following 10 years. His pioneer work appeared in three volumes (see Lorimer 1935–1938). Hermann Berger revised and supplemented Lorimer's material in a series of publications (see Berger 1992) and in three final volumes (Berger 1998). For a summary of the language and its history of exploration (since the first information by Cunningham, Hayward, Leitner and Biddulph), see: Buddruss 2006, 236–238. According to a local and by far too high estimate, reported by Willson 1999, 10, who studied the region between 1988 and 1990, the Burúśo population was 50,000 for Hunza, 52,000 for Nagar, 40,000 for Yasin, and 30,000 in the Gilgit area. [+ On the Hunza-Nagar area see the recent Frembgen 2022].

[17] Drew 1875, 425–427. Biddulph 1880, 34–45. Leitner 1893, 62–63.

Frederick Drew in his description of the social hierarchic system of the Dards in the Gilgit Agency could distinguish four castes – “Shīn, Yashkun, Kremin, Dúm”. The Shin were seen as the dominating caste as they themselves think to represent “the aristocracy of the country”. They are the landlords owning most of the land. But, even John Biddulph suggested, that this group of highest status came as a late wave of immigrants from Pakli, the area between the Indus and the Kishanganga River, into the Upper Indus, thereby introducing the Hindu religion and defeating the local aboriginal population.[18] Their peculiarity was their engagement in goat-breeding, deeply integrated into the spiritual system which Karl Jettmar called “a natural pastural ideology with livestock symbolism, like that in the ritual heritage of the Kalasha-Kafirs”. He saw them also as conquerors immigrated from “southern border mountains” (Jettmar 1999[a], 390; 1957, 23). A. H. Dani connected their invasion into this region during the end of the 8th or beginning of the 9th century AD, causing the decline of the Buddhist period, which he designated as the phase of the Battle-Axe people as represented in the rock art.[19]

The next group, the Yeshkun, with a high status as farmers owning less land than the Shin, assists the highest caste. They are seen by the first explorers as “the descendants of an aboriginal Burushaski-speaking population”, which adopted the language Shina from the new occupants, but continued to exist as a separate caste next to other “occupational groups” such as the highest caste, the Shin, and the poorer Kamin.[20]

The Kamin of medium status owning still less land in regard to the Dom, the Gujars and the Sonival / Maruts are socially inferior to the farmers. This caste is known from Punjab and the region between the rivers Kabul and Swat as tenant farmers and craftsmen. The Dom as a minority group of artisans, as in other parts of the subcontinent, are considered as belonging to the lowest social stratum and are excluded from central spheres of the society.[21] Yet, with their specialized services as blacksmiths and musicians they are nevertheless of essential benefit for the community. The indigenous low-caste groups live in a wide range of the Sub-Himalayan region from the delta of Bengal to the Upper Indus, where they constitute more numerous communities in villages in Chilas, Yasin, Hunza and Nager. The stock of both groups is said to have come from the south.[22]

The Sonival / Maruts seem to have settled along the Upper Indus River and in some side valleys ever since Antiquity, as reflected in classical sources (Herodotus, Plinius, Strabo, al-Biruni and Sanskrit sources). Nowadays, there are larger concentrations of these groups living mainly in Dodishal, Khanbari, Hodar [Hodur] and Chilas. Smaller goldwasher communities are found in nearly all villages along the Indus River between Shatial in Kohistan and Bagrot in the Gilgit District.

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[18] Biddulph 1880, 39, 155–164.

[19] Dani 1983a, 231.

[20] The idea of an aboriginal Burushaski-speaking population was opposed by Schomberg 1935, 119, but supported by Jettmar 1957, 23; 1961a, 81; 2001, 75.

[21] A comprehensive study of the Dom is owed to Schmid 1997.

[22] Jettmar 1961a, 81.

The three roads leading from Pakistan's capital Islamabad via the ancient city of Taxila through the focal point Mansehra, the junction of four main roads and the place where king Aśoka of the Mauryan Dynasty left his fourteen rock edicts, and on to Thakot [Besham] on the right side of the Indus and the entrance of the Karakorum Highway (henceforth also abbreviated as KKH) are described by A. H. Dani.[23] Coming from the Hazara Plain the traveller had to traverse the Kat Galai Pass before he could cross the bridge of Thakot [Besham] and enter into the 751 kilometre-long Karakorum Highway, called colloquially KKH. The road follows the flow of the Upper Indus gorges on its west bank through Kohistan with its impressive wild mountains. At Shatial with the bridge leading into the Darel Valley the highway passes the site of the projected Diamer-Basha dam, which will threaten most of the important ancient sites and rock carving assemblages, such as fin Harban, Bazeri Das, Minar Gah, Thor, Oshibat, Hodar Bridge, Gichi till Chilas and Dong Nala: all will be submerged by the future Diamer-Basha reservoir. The modern road upstream from the Indus, from Chilas to Raikot Bridge until the construction of the forerunner of the KKH, has been described as "difficult and almost impassable even for men of foot".[24] There is a line of rock carvings following the main route of the ancient "Indus Valley Road" on the northern bank of the Upper Indus. Complexes of petroglyphs mark river crossings, thus showing that this route, "such as it is, constantly crosses and recrosses the Indus" by suspended bridges or rafts.[25]

The ancient routes along both banks of the Indus are accompanied by chains of rock art galleries. They form clusters around ancient settlements or forts and monasteries such as Shatial or Hodar and main river crossings. The valley opens at Chilas, the headquarters of Diamer District, which is enhanced by the majestic 8126 metre-high Nanga Parbat [Map; Table 2.1]. Since the 19th century the 9th highest mountain peak in the world bears this name, "the naked mountain", but before it was called Diamer (correctly Diva-Meru meaning "Heavenly Mount")[26] by the local population in Shina language – the place "where the fairies meet". Bypassing the second highest mountain of Pakistan, marking the western corner-pillar of the Himalaya, the high plain of Gilgit is reached through the side valley of Gilgit-Ghizer to Ishkoman. Or going farther to Hunza in the north with the 7788 metre-high Rakaposhi, called Dumani by the Hunza Kuts and one of the peaks identified with Meru, the road leads to the Khunjerab Pass at the Pakistani-Chinese border [Map; Table 3.1]. Another important route to the east follows from the river crossing at Alam Bridge after passing the wide river plain through the narrow gorges of the Indus towards Skardu, the ancient centre of Baltistan. From there, a road leads to the northeast across the Indus and over the low pass Strongdokma La (2420 m) into the Shigar Valley to Shigar (Ši-dkar), which has been described by F. Drew as

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[23] Dani 1995, 22–27.

[24] Biddulph 1880, 15. According Mulla Ata Muhammad 1876 "the worst road (from Chilas) is to Bunji, along the left bank of the Indus, which is dangerous and often impracticable in many places": Gazetteer 1890, route no. 2, p. 4.

[25] Leitner 1893, 79.

[26] Dani 1983a, 1.

"the most delightful place in all Baltistan".[27] From there one of the most frequented ancient tracks follows the Braldo tributary across the Baltoro Glacier and the Mustagh Pass to Yarkand in Xinjiang. Of strategical importance are the two main connections between Baltistan and Ladakh, the "upper route" along the Shyok River and the "lower route" along the Indus. The upper road leads from Kiris, the smallest territory of the five Balti kingdoms Kye-ris, east of the confluence of Shyok with the Indus, along the right bank of the Shyok to Balghar-Foqnaqh opposite Yugo and from there to Saling near Khaplu. The capital of the Balti kingdom Khaplu (Kha-bu-lu) is the starting point for the road leading on the left bank of the Shyok to Ladakh or through the Saltoro Valley to the Karakorum Pass and farther to Yarkand. The southern route connecting Baltistan with Ladakh follows the left bank of the Indus River from Kartaksho, one of the five kingdoms called Gar-dag-ša in Kharmang.

2 Geographical Setting of the Western Himalayas

The 2400 kilometre-long mountain arc consisting of the Hindukush, the Indian Caucasus of the Greeks, and the Pamirs in the west with the Karakorum in the north and of the High Himalaya in the east – the Imaos and Emodos of the ancient Greeks (Plin. *HN* VI 60) or the "snowy" *haimavata* (Emodos) and *himavat* (Imaos) in Sanskrit – forms a formidable barrier blocking the Indian subcontinent against the Tibetan plateau and the highlands of Central Asia.[28] The High Himalaya Range forms also a climatic divide where on its southern slopes the monsoon rains lash fertilising subtropic vegetation in the lower regions, which pass over to Alpine forests and pastures in the higher mountain ranges.

The Karakorum range ('Black Gravel'), "the whitest, iciest range of the mountains outside polar regions" is situated parallel to the northeast of the Himalaya, extending from the northwest to the southeast approximately 700 km with a width of up to 150 km.[29]

The Karakorum adjoins the Hindukush and the Pamir in the west, and the Kunlun in the North. The boundaries of the mountain range are defined on the south by the bend of the Shyok River to its junction with the Indus River, then by the Indus to its junction with the

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[27] Drew 1875, 365–366.

[28] Imaos and Emodos comprise the eastern Hindukush and Himalayas (Ptol. *Geog.* VI 14,1. 15,1. VII 1).

[29] The term Karakorum / Karakoram and its boundaries have been defined during the "Karakoram Conference" of the Royal Geographic Society in 1936: Mason 1938. Tahirkheli – Jan 1984 sees the border between Karakorum and Hindukush in the Yasin Valley. See the comprehensive overview of Heichel 2003 with map II showing the different mountain ranges and groups of the Karakorum. For the earlier discussion about the nomenclature of the "Karakoram-Himalaya", see: Mason 1930a, 40 with diagram. Mason 1930b, Longstaff 1930. The name "Karakoram" has been extended from the pass of that name to the whole watershed by the earliest explorers (the main features of 'Karakoram' were determined by Colonel T. G. Montgomerie after his surveys of 1855–1865 and S. G. Burrard 1929). [+ For bibliographical updates on the Hindukush region, the repertory published in 2022 *Cultures of the Hindukush after Jettmar. A Bibliography* (Cacopardo 2022) is essential].

Gilgit River, and by the Gilgit to the confluence of the Ishkoman River. On the west it is bordered by the Ishkoman and Karumbar rivers towards the Khora Bhurt Pass (or Chilinji Pass). This wild mountain range with deeply cut valleys includes a veritable ocean of 100 peaks rising to over 7000 m and several others over 8000 m with Godwin Austen (K2) or Dapsang (8611 m) – the second highest peak in the world. Alone three of fourteen eight-thousanders existing in the world, such as Gasherbrum I (K3) or Hidden Peak (8068 m), Broad Peak (8047 m) and Gasherbrum II (8035 m) tower above the end of the Shigar Valley in Baltistan, encircling the upper corries of the Baltoro glacier. The massifs contain vast glaciers, such as the Batura with a length of 60 km and a width of 3 km the largest glacier, the Pasu and Ghulkin glaciers which all together meet the Hunza Valley.

South of the Karakorum, the Trans-Himalayan or Ladakh Range runs parallel until the Shigar Valley in Baltistan, and includes the over 4000-m high Deosai or Devil's Plateau, along the northern boundary of Kashmir. Groups of the Great Karakorum are traditionally also called the Muztagh or Bolor mountains by the Balti people.[30]

The Hindukush, the great snowy mountains, situated to the west of the Karakorum and extending from the east-north-east to the west-south-west at a length of ca. 800 km and to a width of 50 to 350 km, forms a barrier between the Indus and the valley of the Amu-Darya, the classical Oxus. The mountains reach an average height of around 4500 m with the tallest peaks Tirich Mir (7708 m) and Noshaq (7492 m) dominating the Kunar Valley. Both mountain systems meet in the area of Yasin-Ishkoman. Three large mountain systems meet at the Khora Burt Pass and the Karumbar-Ishkoman Valley, the Pamir from north-east, the Karakorum from the south-east, and the Hindukush from the west. Another spectacular junction-point is situated southeast of Gilgit at the confluence of the Gilgit River with the Indus, where the massifs of the Himalaya from the (north)east, Karakorum from the northeast and Hindukush from the west collide.[31] The majestic Nanga Parbat (8126 m) forms here the western corner-pillar of the Himalayas bordered by the flow of the Indus and towering above the plain of Bunji. The "naked mountain" received its name from the rulers of the 19th century, but it is locally called Diamar meaning Deva-Meru, the "Heavenly Mount". The summit is the watershed between the Indus and the Jhelum rivers.

The Indus River, the classical Indos, was first recorded in the 5th century BC by Herodotus, the 'father of history' (Hdt. IV 44) and by Ctesias ([Phot. *Bibl.*]), who after 401 BC lived several years as a physician at the royal court of Artaxerxes II. (404–359 BC). But even earlier, the expedition of Skylax, a mariner from Karyanda in Karia, was ordered in 518 BC by Great King Darius I to investigate the estuary of the Indus and to explore the possibilities of establishing sea connections between India along the southern Iranian coasts and around littoral Arabia to the harbours of the Red Sea.

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[30] The different mountain groups of the Mustagh are laid down in the map 'Karakoram' by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, Zurich 1990, see Heichel 2003, 20. [+ On Bolor HH quoted also Jettmar 1979b [+1977b], 1980d, and 1989e].

[31] Searle 1991, 53–55 fig. 1.1. Heichel 2003, 18, 21.

The Greek Indus corresponds to the Sinthos in the famous *Periplus Mari Erythraeai* of the 1st century AD, to the Hindhu in Old Persian, to the Sindhu in Sanskrit, to Abba-Sin in Pushtu, and to Hsin-t'ou in Chinese records. The course is 3180 km long, from its headwaters on the north slopes of the Mt. Kailash massif (6714 m) in the Gangdisê Range of the western Trans-Himalaya in Tibet to its mouth on the Arabian Sea. The "ice-mountain" called Kangrinboqê in Tibetan is sacred both to Buddhists and Hindus – Śri Kailāśa, the Indian Olympus, the abode of Lord Śiva, and his consort Parvati. After the expansion of Hinduism the mountain has often been identified with Meru of Indian cosmology, the centre of the Universe.[32] Kailāśa is sacred, because it is the source of the four great South Asian river systems:[33] Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra in the east, Satluj a tributary of the Indus in the west, Karnali called Ghaghara in India in the south, one of the main affluents of the Ganges River, and at last the Indus in the north. The ancient sacred symbol of the swastika is said to have been deduced by the great South Asian streams rising from the Kailāśa. The Indus River flows from its source emerging in Mansarovar Lake at an altitude of 5300 m westwards from the southwestern part of the Tibetan plateau and cuts in its upper third (reaches), lying mainly in Kashmir, through a deep tectonic valley between the ranges of the Himalayas and the Karakorum. After cutting through the Ladakh range the River runs through the wide basin of Skardu in Baltistan, and from there gushes down into the formidable chasm of the Rondu Gorge. After the confluence with the affluents Hunza and Gilgit the River flows down to the south into a sequence of narrow gorges in the Diamer District and through the barren mountains of eastern Kohistan before it turns to the southeast at Jalkot. From an altitude of ca. 2280 m around Skardu the torrent flows off to 1310 m around Bunji and ca. 900 m at Sazin in Kohistan. With its tributaries the Indus has cut several openings through this barrier, which includes the world's 14 highest mountain peaks towering at more than 8000 m. The ice- and snow-capped mountain scenery with steep-sided summits towering to more than 7000 and 8000 m of the Nanga Parbat – Haramosh Ranges as well as the High Karakorum form an enormous contrast to narrow, deeply incised gorges and wide basins with rich vegetation.

The environmental conditions of the Indus Valley, characterized by its bed deeply cut into rocks and sediments and the enormous change of water volume between its maximum in summer and its minimum between October and April, have prevented artificial irrigation by the installation of canals. The scarce rainfall in the valleys is another obstacle for intensive agriculture and therefore for the emergence of larger settlements in the valley. A further peculiarity of the geological situation is the fact that landslides can block not only communication routes but sometimes the river as well, thus creating lakes. Especially the Indus Valley in the Nanga Parbat area is endangered by landslips and mud avalanches because of the neotectonic active Raikot fault in connection with the special topographical situation there. Such great cataclysms of the Indus River and its tributaries have changed cultivated plains like those of Skardu, Bunji or downstream as far as Kohistan. Some of the early writers due to their limited knowledge of the geographical situation concerned here presented contradictory evidence of these floods, which are reported since 1780. Major Kenneth Mason examined the different records and described two big floods caused by the collapse of an ice bridge of the Shyok glaciers in 1835 and 1926; it seriously affected the plain of Skardu but had no further impact lower down the Indus at the confluence with the Gilgit River.[34] The ill-famed great Indus flood of 1841, which began with a landslide in the Fall of 1840, dammed the river at a stretch of ca. 30 km for six months. It inundated the cultivated land around Bunji and destroyed ca. 200 homes there. This flood was first recorded by Frederick Drew, who located the landslip below the Hattu Pir.[35] The worst of all historical Indus floods resulted from the burst of the earthen dam near Bunji, which was formed by "the collapse of the Lechar spur of Nanga Parbat, opposite Gor", causing disastrous waves of water, sands and gravel.[36]

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[32] Cunningham 1854, 43, 50–52 named the mountain Kailás or Gangri Range. See also Tucci 1977, 27.

[33] The first description of the Indus from its source and its course to its mouth is summarized by Cunningham 1854, 84–94. A study of the landscape of the Indus region was undertaken by Prölss 1931.

According to Algernon Durand, the disastrous flood of 1841 "was caused by a gigantic landslip, probably following an earthquake", which converted the plain of Bunji into a lake. "The Gilgit River, which runs into the Indus six miles above Bunji, was dammed up for thirty miles to just below the present fort of Gilgit. When the barrier broke after some months, as the people downstream still remember today, vast cultivated lands such as around Ges were covered with sand, and sites such as the old village of Thalpan were ruined. At the foot of the hill range, just at the eastern end of the wide Thalpan sand terrace before the road follows the course of the deeply Khinar brook to the new Thalpan village, remains of the old occupation with some Muslim graves are still preserved."[37] The former field demarcations and water channels are still visible across the sandy plain. The most terrible disaster of the flood occurred after two days, 260 miles below the damming near Attok, where the stream reaches into the open plains of the lowlands. There close to the river detachments of the Sikh army under Raja Golabh Singh had their camp, which unfortunately had not received any warnings of the coming catastrophe. Warnings actually had been sent by Raja Karim Khan of Gilgit, written on birch-bark as message in a bottle, sent down the river. Picturesque reports of this disaster have been handed down by local eye-witnesses: “As an old woman with a wet cloth sweeps away an army of ants, like the river swept away the army of the Maharaja”.[38] The second great flood of the Indus River occurred in 1856, caused by an obstruction to the Hunza River or its tributary Shingshal.[39] Another great flood of the Indus, which came from the Gilgit River and passed Bunji, “destroyed a large amount of property in British territory both above and below Attok” on 10 August 1858.[40]

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[34] Mason 1929a [+?], Vigne 1844, 362 and Cunningham 1854, 99–100 give for the 1835 cataclysm a date of 1833.

[35] Drew 1875, 414–421.

[36] The landslide happened in December 1840 or January 1841. By the end of May or the beginning of June the lake had reached its maximum of 40 miles length, before it was "liberated" (Mason 1929b, 12). According to the British geographer Henry Haversham Austen-Godwin (Godwin-Austen 1896, 24), the great Indus flood of 1841 should have been caused by the glacial sources of the Nubra and Shigar rivers, entailing "irreparable mischief" to the plain of Skardu. The water waves were retained for nine days by the narrow gorges of Rondu, causing the huge deposits of sands and gravels before gushing forth through the Rondu Gorge with devastating effect throughout the lower part of the Upper Indus valley.

[37] Durand 1900, 27–28; Dani 1983a, 7–8.

The most recent impression of the incalculable dynamics by the geomorphological situation in the high mountains was displayed by the massive landslide at Attaabad in Hunza on January 4, 2010. It caused a 1-km long blockage in the Hunza Valley, thereby causing a lake of more than 28 km that flooded farmland and villages upstream and destroyed 18 km of the KKH downstream.

Larger communities could better survive in side valleys, where the water of rivulets and streams could be used for organized irrigation. And, also on the alluvial fans at the mouth of such tributaries agriculture could rely on both irrigation and direct precipitation (Jettmar 2002, 11).

Since prehistoric times, this mountain range with its passes together with the river valleys formed gateways, which enabled migrations or hostile invasions to occur along the natural routes, later followed by peaceful trade expeditions and Buddhist pilgrims and missionaries or envoy journeys – all contributing to the rich ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in these high mountainous regions, also designated as “Trans-Himalayan District of Historical India”, since 1947 a part of Pakistan.

3 Main Routes in the High Mountain Region

The highly ramified Indus valley system, with the principal mountain tributaries of Shigar and Shyok in Baltistan, Ghizer and Yasin with Gilgit and Hunza around Gilgit, and Astor (in the north of the Nanga Parbat massif) thus constitutes a major connection system between China, Central Asia and India, linking the Tarim Basin, Chinese Turkestan or Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region) and Tibet via Kashmir to the plains of the Punjab in the sub-continent. Xinjiang, the ‘New Dominion’ since its conquest during the Han Dynasty in the 1st century BC, represents the western part of the Celestial Empire. The region had different names in the literature: Before it received its final designation as Xinjiang, it was known as Chinese or High Tartary, Chinese Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan, Kashgaria and Serindia. The southern part of the province now comprises Kashgaria, which is locally called Altešahr with its six towns Kashgar, Yangi, Hissar, Yarkand, Khotan, Aksu and Kucha. It is surrounded in the west by the Pamir, in the south by the Kunlun Shan and Karakorum, and in the north by the majestic T'ien Shan, the 'celestial mountains. The east is free of mountain ranges, but its approach is hindered by the Gobi and Lop deserts. The 'Moving Sands', *Liu Sha*, as the Chinese called the Taklamakan, appears as an egg-shaped blank on the map. The region between Badakshan and Yarkand, surrounded on three sides by a chain of mountains, has been designated by its altitude as *Bam-i-Dunya*, the 'roof of the world'.[41]

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[38] According Durand 1900, 27–28; Drew 1875, 414–421; Biddulph 1880, 19; Schomberg 1935, 18. Dani 1983a (7–8 and 2001, 37), mentions the effect of this flood on the old Thalpan village. The ruined old mosque in the abandoned village of Hodar, Chilas District, according Dani 1989 (102–103 fig. 19, pl. 44) is said to have been destroyed by the Indus flood of 1841. Dani 2001, 129 supposed an Indus flooding of the region around Chilas, “a historic catastrophe”, caused by a severe earthquake which affected Taxila around 30 AD, assumed by Marshall 1960a, 137. This assumption is, of course, not historically testified.

[39] Mason 1929b, 11.

[40] The Indus flood of 1858 is reported from Bunji and Attok by Captain Montgomerie 1860.

The modern exploration of both the Western Himalaya and High Asia was inaugurated by William Moorcroft (ca. 1765–1824), who was sent by the British East India Company to India in 1808.[42] His mission as veterinary surgeon during his first journey in 1812 across the Niti Pass in Garhwal in central Himalaya into Tibet was to search for the goats, from which wool for the much sought-after Kashmir shawls were made. His second journey from Kashmir through Peshawar to Balkh and Bukhara was officially justified to purchase a breeding stock of Turkoman horses to improve the native cavalry-horse of India in size and strength. The aim of this pioneer of Central Asian travel, an eccentric and visionary explorer, was to track down the main roads beyond the high mountain range dividing the regions "where three empires meet" – the Tsarist Empire, China and Great Britain – and to assess their feasibility as strategical and trade routes.

The exploratory work in this 'blank spot' between India and Central Asia was in the interest of the British who gave all facilities to travellers following in Moorcroft's footsteps. He and his companion George Trebeck died under unknown circumstances in Afghanistan, like other explorers after them. The daring English explorer Godfrey Thomas Vigne (1801–1863), an amateur botanist, geologist and geographer, penetrated into the Western Himalayas in the late 1830s and delivered the first eye-witness account of the Indus Valley at Bunji. The Indus River was seen as the western border of Kashmir, and the mountain region west of the Indus as far as Afghanistan was summarized under the geographical term 'Yaghistan', the land of the ungovernable savages. A first insight of the upper Indus region with the bordering Hindukush was presented by Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840–1899). The name of this most remarkable linguist and famous orientalist is connected with the beginnings of scientific exploration of the Northern Areas. Born in Budapest of Jewish parents, an amazing career brought him to Malta and to Turkey. As interpreter in the British Army he was a colonel in the Crimean war, who after the democratic rebellion of 1848 against the Habsburgian Empire had to take refuge in England.[43] Being a scholar interested in anthropology and the study of different ethnicities, Leitner came to Lahore. He identified the Yaghi as Dards, the descendants of the Daradae or Dardai of the classical descriptions and the Daradas of the Sanskrit literature. Knight later on pointed to the problem, that "there are no people who call themselves Dards, and there is no region known as Dardistan to its habitants".[44] Since its introduction in the geographic literature the name has become convenient, but it is misleading, because it comprises a large area between Kafiristan in the west and Kashmir in the east. It includes the districts of Astor and Gilgit, the former kingdoms Hunza, Nagar and Yasin, and the independent republics of the Upper Indus.

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[41] Yule 1872, 469–470.

[42] Moorcroft – Trebeck 1841.

The knowledge of the ancient main routes and by-ways used since prehistoric periods between both Central Asia and the historical India and the different regions in the Northern Areas is based on the reports by European explorers and British officers of the 19th and early 20th century. A synopsis of the traditional routes in the western Himalaya was compiled for the first time by K. Mason in 1929.[45]

In the history of the exploration of the Himalayan mountains a considerable step forward was achieved by the three Bavarian brothers, Adolph, Herrmann and Robert Schlagintweit, whose "Mission to India and High Asia 1854–1857" was enabled by a recommendation of Alexander von Humboldt and with the support of the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and again under the patronage of the East India Company.[46] These Bavarian geographers were the first to penetrate the Himalayas from east to west, from Sikkim, Nepal through Kumaun and Garhwal to the Panjab Himalaya and the Nanga Parbat massif. They were also the first to break through the mountain barrier separating India and Chinese Turkestan, to cross the Karakorum and Kunlun and to reach the headwaters of the Indus in Tibet. The first descriptions of the main pass routes through the mountain range and of 63 glaciers is owed to their three years' expeditions. Since their tremendous research, the Kunlun, Karakorum as the main watershed in Asia and the Himalayas are known as different mountain systems.[47] Their second travel began in 1856 in Simla, showing the brothers on different routes. Hermann and Robert went to Leh in Ladakh and across the Karakorum to Turkestan, whereas Adolph headed his tour de force through the Zanskar-Himalaya and Ladakh mountains into the Shyok

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[43] His life with the controversial assessments of his role as explorer and scholar is summarized by Keay 1979, 15–40; 1982, 144–164; 1996, 288–314.

[44] Knight 1893, 85–87. On the toponym 'Dardistan' and its questions see above.

[45] Kenneth Mason 1929a. A guidebook published by Arora 1940 describes also the then used main routes from Kashmir and Ladakh to Gilgit-Baltistan.

[46] Schlagintweit 1875a and 1875b. The life-story of the Schlagintweit brothers is summarized by Körner 1982. On the tragic death of Adolph Schlagintweit in Kashgar, see: Kreutzmann 2015 [+ Brescius – Kaiser – Kleidt (eds) 2015; Schlagintweit 1859].

[47] For early descriptions of pass routes through the mountain ranges, see: Schlagintweit 1875a and 1875b. For a synopsis of all routes, see: Gazetteer 1890, especially Mason 1929a; Jettmar 1994; Rizvi 1999; Heichel 2003; Sen 2003, 169–176 map 4; Haines 2004; Dar 2006.

Valley and Baltistan. In two excursions he ventured to the Masherbrum [Table 4.1] and up the Mustagh Pass, but because of the rapacious Hunzakuts controlling the other side he had to return to Skardu, the headquarters of Baltistan. His observations and lithographs of "glaciers in Balti" are of great scientific value for the later geological research in the Karakorum. From Skardu after traversing the Burji Pass he crossed the vast high plateau of Deosai and reached via Astor the south side of the Nanga Parbat massif. His famous panorama of the mountain represents the first scientific acknowledgement by a European. From there he returned along the traditional Gilgit-Kashmir route to Srinagar, where he joined his brothers.[48]

Adolph Schlagintweit's last daring trek aimed to reach through Yarkand the legendary city of Kashgar (Kashi) in a region of Eastern Turkestan, which no European had crossed again since the Venetian Marco Polo around 1270 and the Portuguese Jesuit Bento di Góis (Benedikt Goës) in 1604. There, being a foreign explorer, he was not received with traditional hospitality but was seen by the Turkestani chieftain Sayad Vali Khan of Kokand, who led a rebellion against the Chinese supremacy, as a spy. And therefore he was beheaded on 26 August 1857.[49] At the instigation of the Russian consul at Kashgar, Nicolai Fedorovitsch Petrovskij, and the Russian Geographical Society in 1888 a monument to his memory was erected near the site of Adolph Schlagintweit's murder; after some years it was destroyed by floods.[50]

With his name the foundation for the subsequent German dramatic mountaineer expeditions to the Nanga Parbat massif was laid, as well as for the accompanying scientific explorations of German and Austrian scholars of 1934, 1937, 1938 and 1939, and ultimately connected therewith the conquest of the peak in 1953 by the Tyrolian Hermann Buhl.[51] This outstanding mountaineer succeeded four years later in vanquishing another eight-thousander of the Karakorum, the Broad Peak (8051 m), for the first time in 1957. During this expedition he was reported missing after his attempt to conquer the neighbouring Mount Chogolisa.

3.1 Main routes across the Hindukush and Karakorum

This intermediate region, the Northern Areas, which can also be seen since early human history as more a part of Central Asia than of the Subcontinent, has always been accessible from Khotan through the Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan over key passes like Khora Burt

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[48] Bauer 1955, 7–14. Kick 1967, 37–42 fig. 1–2. The lithographs show the mountain panorama on the right bank of the Shyok River south of the Karakorum Pass (9 August 1856), Saser Glacier between Rimo Mustagh and Saser Mustagh, Glacier in the Hushe Valley. For a description of the route used by the German Nanga Parbat expedition 1934, see: Finsterwalder et al. 1935, 131–132 with map p. 128 and Bauer 1955, map 1.

[49] Schlagintweit 1859.

[50] Kreutzmann 2015, 106–111.

[51] Finsterwalder et al. 1935. Bauer 1955. After the failed attempt of Mummery in 1895 to climb the Nanga Parbat a renewed endeavour was started by a German-American team in 1932.

(4630 m), Baroghil (3804 m) and Darkot (4575 m) in the eastern Hindukush, or Irshad Uwin (4870 m) within the Koz group of the western or Little Karakorum.[52] The lowest mountain pass Baroghil, passable for pack animals during only eight months of the year, lies at the head of the Yarkhun and Turikho valleys, and the Darkot Pass is situated at the head of the Karumbar and Wurshigum valleys. This primary route, through the side-valleys of the Gilgit River such as the three main branches Ghizer and Yasin, Karumbar–Ishkoman, seems to have played an important role since prehistoric times. The carving of a 'mchodrten', a cross-like outline of a stupa, which is accompanied by a Tibetan inscription, found by Marc Aurel Stein south of the Darkot Pass, bear witness of the route's importance as a crossing between Wakhan and the Gilgit region during 8th century.[53] Lieutenant George G. Hayward, the first British pioneer of frontier exploration in this part of British India's border, explored all main passes across the mountain barrier to the basins of Oxus, Yarkand and Sarikol. He had seen as the most excellent route connecting Kashmir and the basin of Oxus that through the valleys of Gilgit and Yasin as the true road besides the route through the Chitral Valley.[54] This route with the passes at the head of the Karumbar and Yasin valleys is also in a tragic way connected with his name. During his second expedition in 1870, which should direct him from Gilgit to Badakshan, he and several of his companions were stoned to death at the instigation of Mir Walis, the chief of Yasin, near the village of Darkot.[55]

From the Yasin the Darkot Pass leads to the Baroghil Pass, the door to Wakhan. The route across the Khora Burt Pass to Little Pamir, the roof of the world, was traversed by Lieutenant (later Sir) Francis Younghusband, then Assistant Political Agent in Hunza, as the first European in 1891. It was described by Stein as "very difficult at all times and quite unpracticable for load-carrying men in the summer and early autumn, when the Karambar River completely fills its narrow rock-bound gorge".[56] But contrary to ancient road constructions such as those along the Upper Indus River Valley or in the Hunza Valley, all of these routes seem to have existed only as simple stony tracks. Another important commercial route leading from Chitral to Upper Badakshan, across the Dorah Pass (14,800 feet) (or Mandal Pass), was used between July and September by laden animals through the Kunar Valley (or the valleys of the Bashgul or Arnawai) to the rich valleys of eastern Badakshan. The road even offered a far more direct connection between India and the Oxus region. These northern passes provided during all periods both peaceful trader caravans and incursions of hostile forces difficult, but by no means insurmountable gateways from the crossroads through Badakshan to this part of historical India across the Eastern Hindukush and Karakorum. Therefore Chitral and Gilgit were of great importance for British India as watch-towers, when the valleys south of the mountain barrier might be safeguarded or controlled.[57] Traditional "mountain gates" in the northeast, open throughout the year to horses and camel caravans, such as the three main passes Kilik (4827 m) at the head of the Hunza River and Mintaka (4709 m) or the Khunjerab (4600 m) used nowadays, open the access across the watershed, both linking the northern arm of the Silk Route (Pamir plateau) from Kashgar, the most westerly oasis town in Chinese Turkestan, and the southern branch of the Silk Route from Khotan via Yarkand, Tashkurgan (T'sung Ling) and through the Kilik and Chapursan valleys into the Hunza gorge and down to the Gilgit plain.[58]

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[52] The route from Wakhan across the Darkot or Baroghil Pass to Yasin was described by Yule 1872, 462–463. See also: Gazetteer 1890; Curzon 1896, 61–62 and 2012, 173–176, 194–197; Stein 1916, 107–108; Longstaff 1920–1921, 158–159; Mason 1929a; Jettmar 1994; Rizvi 1999; Heichel 2003; Sen 2003, 169–176 map 4; Haines 2004; Dar 2006.

[53] Stein 1928, 45–47, 1050–1051 fig. 48. Mock 2013.

[54] Hayward 1871. This route was explored by the Yarkand Expedition of 1870 on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society: Ibrahim Khan 1871.

[55] Drew 1871. The murder of Hayward, whose grave lies outside the Agency at Gilgit, is said to have been under instruction by his father-in-law, Aman-ul-Mulk of Chitral. There is more information in an eye-witness account given by Curzon 2012, 34–36.

[56] Stein 1922, 119. His knowledge of the different pass routes in the eastern Hindukush apparently is more reliable than Tsuchiya 1999, 365–388, who regards the Khora Burt passage "as one of the easiest passes by which to cross the Pamirs". See also the description by Longstaff 1920–1921, 160–163.

This track "was ever ascending and descending, the traveller having to scramble as best he can from crevice to crevice along the face of the precipices. Looked at from below, much of the way appears quite impassable for any creature, and is, indeed, in places difficult even for hill-men".[59] The cavalry Colonel Algernon Durand, from his first visit of the region, gave a vivid description of the communication situation: "When I first visited Gilgit, there was not a yard of what we should call a road in the whole region, and only one permanent bridge over the Chitral river at Chitral itself. Narrow paths, so narrow that often while the rider's boot on one side brushed the cliff, his outer foot overhung a precipice, followed the course of the streams. Often in the course of one short march the path ascends a thousand feet or more to avoid crossing some precipitous cliff, and the repeated ascents and descents render riding a weariness to the flesh. Frequently the path is carried across the face of a cliff on roughly constructed galleries, upheld by shaky timbers jammed into interstices in the rock".[60] But just this path through the Hunza Gorge as described both in the *Hanshu* and the *Hou Hanshu* seems to correspond to the 'Ji-bin route', which "starts in the south-west of Pi-shan, passes through Wu-cha, crosses the *xuandu* or "suspended crossings", passes through Ji-bin and then arrives in Wu-i-shan-li country after travelling for over 60 days" (Yong 1986, 213–214). The Hunza route with the Kilik Pass, the northern section of a 'Proto-Karakorum Highway',[61] has been one of the much followed two chief routes between Eastern Turkestan in two directions to Kashmir and into the lowlands of modern Pakistan.

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[57] Wylly 1912, 165–166.

[58] Yule 1872, 463. The route from Yarkand across the Kilik Pass has been described "to be much the best for foot passengers": Trotter 1875, 165. See also: Gazetteer 1890, 369–370 (route no. 15). Skrine 1925, 231–234. Mason 1929a, 175–180 (route no. 87). Hill 2009, 502. Curzon 2012, 37–45, 51–76. In 1892–1893 Brigadier-General G.K. Cockerill was ordered to reconnoitre the main route and other byways leading from Hunza and Nagar to Sarikol and Tashkurgan in East Turkestan across the Khunjerab, Mintaka, Kilik, Wakhjir and Irshad (4880 m) passes (Cockerill 1922). A lively description of the route from Kashgar through Tashkurgan and across the Mintaka Pass to Hunza and Gilgit is given by Peter Fleming during his journey in 1935 from Peking to Kashmir (Fleming 1936 [1936], 335–383).

[59] Knight 1893, 502. After the establishment of the Gilgit Agency by 1899 under Colonel Algernon Durand the northern route from Gilgit through Hunza to Chinese Turkestan, in 1892/93 explored by the mission of Colonel (Sir) William Lockhart's mission of 1886, followed by Brigadier-General Cockerill (Cockerill 1922) and in 1887 by Colonel Younghusband (Younghusband 1896, 186, 246–247; 1926; 1930) became of strategic interest for the British and was therefore expanded (Haines 2004, 552). Durand also bridged the Indus River at Bunji: "a passable road leads to Chilas, and the communications generally are improving" (Durand 1894, 687).

The region around Hunza and Nagar is also located in the center of a network from where byways lead eastwards across the Shimshal Pass and through the Hispar Valley across the extended Hispar glacier to Askole and into the Shigar Valley in Baltistan.[62] This route seems to have been not very familiar, but Colonel Godwin-Austen in 1864 recorded raids across the Hispar Pass: "It was by this way that the Nagyr men used to come into the Braldoh and loot the villages; their raid was some twenty-four years since (i.e. about 1840), when a body of from seven hundred to eight hundred crossed over, and carried off about one hundred men and women, together with all the cows, sheep, and goats, they could collect".[63] Guard-towers securing the path leading to the village had been erected as a defence against raids by the Nagar people. The route from Hunza westwards leads along the long trough formed by the Chapursan Valley across the difficult Chillingi Pass at its head to the valley of Upper Karumbar with Ishkoman and then southwest across the Shandur Pass (3734 m) as far as Chitral.[64] The passage leading from Yarkand across the Aghil Range and through the Shaksgam Valley across the Shimshal Pass (and Mintaka Pass) to Hunza was for the first time explored by "the doyen of all Himalayan explorers", Sir Francis Edward Younghusband in 1889.[65]

Another important ancient route across the ice-capped Karakorum Range leading from Khotan and Yarkand to Baltistan had to traverse the old Muztagh Pass situated in the west of the K2 massif and to surmount branches of the Punmah and Baltoro glaciers. Along this track, described as a difficult and dangerous but a short alignment, the traveller could reach Shigar by passing Askole in the Broldu Valley leading into the Shigar Valley and Khaplu by following the road through the Hushe Valley [Table 4.1].[66] There are two passes, known as the new Western (5370 m) and the old Eastern Mustagh (5422 m) passes, known as some of the highest and most difficult in the Himalayas. This route is also a natural extension of the "Changthang Corridor" linking the fertile region around Rudok (Tibetan *Rut hog*) in Northern Tibet with Skardu.

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[60] Durand 1894, 687.

[61] Jettmar 1993c, 53.

[62] Conway 1893a.

[63] Godwin-Austen 1864, 29. Quoted and discussed also by Comway 1893a, 138.

[64] Haughton 1913, 235–237. Cockerill 1922.

[65] Younghusband 1896, 222–255. Younghusband 1926.

[66] The Mustagh Route was described by Adolph von Schlagintweit in 1856: Schlagintweit 1875b, 1418. Gazetteer 1890, 435, 611–612 (route no. 65). Mason 1929a, 208–212 (routes no. 98/99).

"It is occasionally used by the Baltis (in the 19th century), who have a colony in Yarkand, and who traverse this pass when returning thence to their own country (in the Braldho Valley and Shigar)".[67] No European had crossed either of the two passes, but during their surveys of Baltistan Adolph Schlagintweit in 1856 and Colonel Godwin-Austen in 1862 reached the southern foot of the passes. Colonel Francis Younghusband ascending from Yarkand, at that time a centre of considerable trade between Turkestan and India, and after crossing the Aghil Range and the Shaksgam (Oprang) River, was the first European with a few 'native' companions to transcend successfully the old Mustagh Pass in 1887. In his description of this quite feasible way down to the first village Askole, which then comprised twenty dwellings, he points out the other pass, the new Mustagh Pass, "some ten miles further west along the range".[68] The group went down the valley of the Braldo River, until it joins the broad Shigar Valley to reach at least Skardu in Baltistan.

But, apparently, besides the more circuitous Karakorum Pass (5578 m) – traditionally the direct connection between Central Asia and India with the starting-point at Yarkand for caravans travelling to Kashmir – which was first crossed by Hermann and Robert Schlagintweit in 1856 – connecting Kashgar via Yarkand with Leh in Ladakh[69] the consolidated Hunza route was the most important one for trade connections with Central Asia.

On a Chinese map of Central Asia (Si-Yu) dating from 1758–1760 the two main routes around the Gobi and Aksu desert meeting in Kashgar indicate the southern Tsung'ling massif, here equated with Bolor, which is to be identified with Baltistan.[70] It was the British army engineer Major-General Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893), later renowned as 'father of Indian archaeology', who threw the first light on the geographical term Bolor, which he equated with Xuanzang's Po-lu-lo. He erroneously narrowed this province to Balti or Little Tibet, the mountain chain extending for 300 miles from the source of the Gilgit and Yasin rivers to the source of the Nubra River. Adding the chain eastward to the source of the Shyok, altogether around 450 miles, the Bolor mountains would correspond with the Karakorum range: "The people of the neighbouring Dârdu districts on the Indus know the Balti only by the name of *Palolo*".[71] Marco Polo's *Belor*, occupied by "malicious idolaterish people" on the contrary, describes a wider area, which in 1272 he traversed on his way from Badakshan to Kashgar. But the Venetian merchant took on his way to Dunhuang, the southern branch of the Silk Route, passing through places like Yarkand, where in later centuries a community of Balti merchants lived. There he could easily have heard accounts of the region south of the Karakorum, the plain of Bolor, i.e. Baltistan. Throughout the Middle Ages Bolor (Bilaur) comprised a vast mountain country south of the Hindu Kush from the valleys of Kafiristan, Upper Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit, Hunza-Nagar as far as Baltistan.[72] Bolor is also known for being rich in gold, which until now is extracted from the sandy banks of the Upper Indus by the *soniwal* or *maruts*, the 'people of gold'.

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[67] Godwin-Austen 1864, 32. Trotter 1875, 12. See also Vigne 1844, vol. II, 283 mentioning this route "as one of the best ways to Yarkund", "much used by saudagurs, or merchants, in their journeys to and from Kashmir". Drew 1875, 37 mentions that between his two visits to Baltistan in 1863 and 1870 there had been no travel between Baltistan and Yarkand.

[68] Younghusband 1896, 150–184; 1926 and 1930. Fifteen years later in 1902 the German A. C. F. Ferber (Ferber 1907) crossed again the Mustagh Pass. See also Vohra 1990 and Rizvi 1999, 16.

[69] The march by the expedition of 1870 under T. D. Forsyth from Lahore and Jammu through Kashmir across the Zojla Pass to Leh as far as Yarkand took 69 days, "exclusive of halts": Henderson – Hume 1873, 11–12. For the different possible routes from Leh to the "bottleneck" of Karakorum Pass, see: Rizvi 1999, 28–31. The pass was open throughout the year and acted therefore as the main commercial route between Punjab and East Turkestan. Rocks with Arabic and Sogdian inscriptions and a few Nestorian crosses at Tangtse, just northwest of the Pangkong Lake mark the importance of this 'Ladakh Route'. They were first noted by the British missionary F. E. Shawe in 1906 and published by A. H. Francke: see Francke 1925. Sims-Williams 1993 refers to four rocks with 14 Sogdian inscriptions; inscription 2 yields "In the year 2010, (we), *Caitra* of Samarkand, together with the monk *Nōsh-farn*, (were) sent (as) messengers to the Qaghan of Tibet", apparently coming from East Turkestan. Vohra 1995 [+ 1994 most probably] and 1999.

Two ancient main routes connect Ladakh and Baltistan.[73] The "upper route" preferred by caravans, runs along the right bank of the Shyok River to Saling (Sagliṅ) and Khaplu and from there passes Kuru (Ku-ro), the small principality of Kiris (Kye-ris) and Nar with its fort, to Skardu or Shigar (Ši-dkar). Through the Nar Valley a track leads to Shigar, and along the Shyok the road goes to the Skardu Plain.

The arduous "lower route" *(yog-laṃ)* or Indus Valley Route from Kargil in the Suru Valley, running along the left bank of the Shingo Valley and along the Indus farther to Tolti and Parkuta (Mehdiabad) in the former kingdom of Kartaksho (Kharmang), has been detailed and lively described by the famous Lady Eleanor Louisa Montagu [Hervey] (1811–1903) in her "adventures of a lady",[74] who travelled there in 1851, and again by Cunningham, who felt the arduousness of his march in particular "when the waters of the river are much swollen by the melted snow".[75] "It is the dullest, as well as one of the most arduous" routes from the Dras Valley to Skardu leading "either over steep slopes of stones that have fallen from the crags above, and which vary in size from a pebble to a railway-carriage, or else you are climbing over precipitous ridges, ('parris' as locally termed), some thousands of feet high and falling sheer to the river. These are usually crossed by means of 'galleries', that is to say, a sort of staircase of flagstones, and by no means stable ones at that, is conducted along the faxe of the precipices, supported on rough beams, which in their turn are held up by stakes stuck into any crevice in the rock that may be handy".[76]

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[70] A first comprehensive discussion about the different localizations of Bolor since its first introduction during the Middle Ages and in Chinese maps of the 18th century was given by Yule 1872, 473–480; see also Curzon 1896, 247. The original Chinese map was redrawn by d'Anville in 1770 (Carte chinoise du Si-Yu ou Asie Centrale, 1758–1760, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: Cartes et Plans, Rés GeD 25948) (information kindly provided by H. Kreutzmann. See: Kreutzmann 2015, 98–99 fig. 4).

[71] Cunningham 1854, 34–35 and 1871, 83–84. [+ On *Belor* see Veniukof 1866].

[72] Curzon 1896, 247.

[73] The distance from Leh to Gilgit by this connection has been estimated by Knight 1893, 70, to cover "around 370 miles, or thirty-two marches".

[74] + Not to be confused with an earlier and possibly more famous Lady Montagu (Lady Mary Wortley Montagu), whose letters from the Orient (*Turkish Embassy Letters* = Wortley Montagu, 1973 [1861]) are better known to the general public.

3.2 Main routes between Kashmir and Gilgit

There have been different possibilities to travel from the Gilgit Valley to the region along the lower part of the Upper Indus between Shatial and Ges, by crossing the Gilgit chains downward into the side valleys of the Indus. The route upstream the Gilgit River leads through the Singul or Kar Gah with Shinghi Gah to the south into the fertile and well populated valleys of Tangir and Darel, as well as those of Khanbari, Hodar, Khinar and Ges. The route from Gilgit through the Kar Gah across the Chonchar Pass into the valleys of Darel and also of Khanbari has often been described as the only track passable for pack animals. This passage was also used by the Kashmir Durbar's troops during his campaign in autumn 1866 against the Shinaki republic of Darel, after the Dogra ruler of Kashmir had gained control of Gilgit in 1860–1866.[77]

There are two main routes leading from Kashmir to the Northern Areas with its centre Gilgit: The traditional 240-mile trek from Gurez (Gurais) in the upper Kishanganga Valley of the Kashmiri foreland traverses the two passes Tragbal (3640 m) and Burzil (4200 m), or via an alternative way across the Kamri Pass (4075 m) into the Astor Valley, and then leads down along the former Indus route to the modern bridge near Raikot in the Upper Indus Valley.[78]

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[75] Lady Montagu published her travel account under her family name, after the marriage with Thomas Kebble Hervey († 1849): Hervey, 1853, 323–366. Cunningham 1854, 162. See also: Thomson 1852, 187–284. Knight 1893, 69–76. Adair 1899, 29–81. About the historical importance of the mentioned sites along this part of the 'Indus Valley Route' (after Arora 1940, 196–198), see also: Schuh 2008, 47, 407–454 [+ On this, see also Hakal 2021].

[76] Adair 1899, 29–30. For another lively account of this arduous route through the most rugged part of the Upper Indus, see: Thomson 1852, 248–284), Meebold 1908, 298–307.

[77] March 1876. Gazetteer 1890, route no. 13. Biddulph 1880, 14. Durand 1900, 272 (see also Dani 1998). Darel like the other communities at Hodar and Gor since 1860 paid tributes to Kashmir. [+ After "Chonchar" HH left a side note: "(??)"].

[78] Gazetteer 1890, 247, 422 (routes no. 23, 68/69). Cockerill 1922, 99. Mason 1929a, 76–81 (routes no. 41 and 42). Arora 1940, 219–228. An expedition of the Royal Geographical Society in 1892 consisting of Sir W. M. Conway, O. Eckenstein, and the artist A. D. McCormick undertook geographical studies along the route between Srinagar and Gilgit, from Hunza-Nagar through the Hispar Valley to Arandu

It took 22 or 23 marches to cope with the distance of 380 km between Srinagar and Gilgit, and nine marches between Astor and Gilgit.[79] After passing the outlet of the Astor Valley, whose narrow and deeply carved out ravine is called *Shaitan Nala* or Devil's Gap, the track leads to the Partab Bridge, an ancient river-crossing; or from the other bridge-head Jaglot across Bunji routes lead through the valleys of Gor (present-day Gorabad) or Sai to the basin of Gilgit, thus bypassing the narrow gorges with its sun-scorched rocks and bleak mountains of the Upper Indus. The hardship for the traveller on this route was increased by the danger of crossing the river near Bunji. Sir George Scott Robertson (1852–1916), who succeeded cavalry Colonel Algernon Durand as British Agent in Gilgit in 1894, went through terrible misfortune during his travel from Srinagar to Gilgit. In August 1888 when crossing the Indus River, one of his boats sunk and most of the Astori coolies drowned.[80] After a wire-rope ferry had been established by Durand in 1891, the transports for supplying the British troops across were secured.[81]

This often described main communication line, the later consolidated "Gilgit Transport Road" or "Gilgit Military Road" of the Sikhs and Dogras, was of considerable strategic importance under British rule by the 1880s for connecting the Kashmir Vale, praised as the blessed

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and Skardu. Conway 1893b, 290–291 describes this travel from Srinagar across the passes Tragbal and Burzil and traversing the Astor Valley to Bunji in 18 marches and after crossing the Indus reaching Gilgit through the Sai Valley in 4 marches. Part of this travel of ca. 240 miles between Srinagar and Gilgit is referred to by Eckenstein 1896. G. N. Curzon 2012, 18–31, conveyed a detailed itinerary of his ride in 1894 on the 'Gilgit Military Road'. Durand 1900, 14–43, 113 describes his march from Kashmir over the Kamri Pass (and Burzil Pass) on the same route up to Gilgit. See also: Curzon 1896, 17, who held the record of the travel between Gilgit and Srinagar in 6 days, and Haines 2004, 542–543. Knight 1893, 36–51, 88–97 also used the traditional Gilgit transport route from Kashmir to Gilgit by traversing the Burzil Pass. He described also the route from Leh across the Zoji La ('La' in Tibetan means 'pass') to Gilgit. For photos of O. Honigmann's travel of 1911 across the Burzil Pass in 1911 with a photo of the guesthouse; see: Appel 2010, 32–35 fig. 43. A lively description of the route and changing landscapes is given by Schomberg 1935, 16–18 and by Trevelyan 1987, 27–34 fig. 5–7, who travelled in 1927 with his family from Srinagar to Gilgit. E. O. Lorimer, the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. R. Lorimer, is owed a report of their ride in June 1934 along the same route (Lorimer 1939, 41–64). This traditional route was used also by the German Nanga Parbat expeditions since 1934, and in 1938 and 1939 the team was allowed to take the more comfortable route from Rawalpindi through the Kaghan Valley across the Babusar Pass to the formerly prohibited Diamer Region: Finsterwalder et al. 1935.

[79] Knight 1893, 88 mastered the distance between Astor and Gilgit in six days. On his ride in 1935, Peter Fleming managed the distance between Gilgit and Srinagar in 8 days – the normal duration of the travel demanded up to 12 legs –, by traversing the route across the Burzil Pass: Fleming 1936 [1936], 383–391.

[80] Robertson 1896, 38–40. Leaving Gilgit he used the traditional route along the rivers Gilgit and Ghizer across the Shandur Pass via Mastuj to Chitral (see map).

[81] Durand 1894, 249. Colonel Algernon Durand was British Agent in Gilgit 1889–1894, military secretary to the Viceroy of India 1894–1899.

land of fabled beauty and eternal romance, from Srinagar via Astor with the British outpost Gilgit. The consolidation of the old track into a military road between Bandipur, which could also be reached from Srinagar by crossing the Wular Lake by boat, and Gilgit was started in 1890 and completed in 1893.

Before the new road was made "the difficulties of the journey to Gilgit were enormous, and men who had to carry loads to the distant garrison suffered heavily", and many perished on the passes or goat paths.[82] The journey to Gilgit before 1890 has been aptly compared with a journey to Siberia. After the road's completion, ponies could carry the supplies and the name Gilgit was "no longer a terror to the people of Kaśmīr". Lord Curzon of Kedlestone, the later viceroy of India, after his 229-long ride in 1894 from Srinagar to Gilgit gave a vivid description of the route through the Astor gorge to Bunji: "As regards the scenery of the road, its main characteristic is the almost total absence of horizontal lines. The track itself winds up and down, now along the roaring bed of snow-grey torrent, around 2000 feet above the yellow riband that humps faintly on the deep gorge below".[83] Until the middle of the 19th century the arterial route was exposed to continual raids by Shinaki tribesmen from Chilas, ill-famed as "the home of rascally cut-throats, whose raids and brutal murders were the curse of the border".[84] They reaped the ripe crops, lifted cattle, killed men, and enslaved women and their children. The robberies by the "dreadful freebooters" of Chilas were interrupted by the intervention of Maharaja Gulab Singh's Dogra troops with 10,000 men in 1851, which ended in the final destruction of the principal Bhot Fort at Chilas in 1855. After that Chilas had to acknowledge the suzerainty of Kashmir by providing hostages to Srinagar and paying a nominal tribute of five tolas of gold-dust and 100 goats. The final loss of its independence was concluded with the establishment of a garrison of British Imperial Service troops in Chilas in 1893, where the Chilas Fort was built by the 23rd Pioneers in 1894,[85] and finally with the installation of an Assistant Political Resident by the British Agency in Gilgit. As an outcome of these events the Chilasis had built up this until present persistent bad reputation as "raiders", "kidnappers", "robbers" and "slave-dealers". After his personal contacts to Chilas, Leitner on the other hand gained a divergent mental attitude against the Shinaki. Such reports pleaded for them as being "brave and by no means quarrelsome" and "since 1856 as a peaceable people".[86]

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[82] Lawrence 1895, 4, 246–247 with chart 3 showing the section of the Gilgit Road from Srinagar to Gilgit, "how to the north of the valley trade must toil up mountains after mountains". Lawrence 1909, 8. Hassnain 2002, 458–464 summarized the hardships of transportation supplies from Srinagar to the garrison at Gilgit after the subjugation by the Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1860.

[83] Curzon 2012, 24

[84] Vigne 1844, vol. II, 301. Biddulph 1880, 15–16; 1893, 343. Durand 1894, 690; 1900, 272.

[85] Report on Chilas Fort of Lieutenant-Colonel C. H. Haswell, Kashmir Residency Office, File no. 3-C (1921). See also Curzon 2012, 239.

[86] Leitner 1893, 78. A local saying characterizes the reputation of the Shinakis: "The shajtan was born in Thor Valley, grew up in Hodur [Hodar] and finally settled in Thak Nala".

Another connection from Kashmir to the Diamer Region around Chilas led through the Buner Valley to the Upper Indus or through the Niat Nala into the Thak Nala, which later formed the second direct connection of military importance between the Kaghan Valley and the Indus Valley Route leading along the southern bank of the River from Chilas to Raikot Bridge.

The link continued from Gilgit westward through Punial on both banks of the Gilgit Valley. Along the southern bank the old mule road from Gilgit led to Gupis with its British Fort, designated in 1829 as "the ultima Thule of India" or rather as the most northerly military post in Indian Empire.[87] From this strategically important post at the entrance to two valleys a mere track led through Ghizer Valley across the 3734 m (12,250 feet) high Shandur Pass to Chitral. This 220-mile long route between Gilgit and Chitral has been described as one of two main connections between Chitral and India, "across the Shandur Pass to the Gilgit Road and thence through Kashmir and the Jhelum Valley to the rail at Rawal Pindi".[88] The pass route was also crossed by the 32nd Pioneers from their headquarters at Bunji and Gilgit under Colonel Kelly in late March 1895 to join the Chitral Relief Expedition, the main force of the First Division, under Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Low, who advanced from Nowshera across the Malakand and Lowari passes.[89] The famous power game of Chitral State ended with the relief of the beleaguered town. From there another branch leads across the Lowari Pass to Dir and Peshawar. Until 1891 the Srinagar – Gilgit route of ca. 228 miles represented the only fair-weather path, before another main crossroad was opened through the Kaghan Valley in the Hazara country across the Babusar Pass.

The traditional route connecting Skardu with Kashmir, which was most frequented by travellers such as Buddhist pilgrims or by the explorer of the Chilasi language and traditions G. W. Leitner in 1886, by the British agent A. Durand in 1889, was also used in 1856 by Adolph Schlagintweit on his return from Baltistan across the Deosai Plateau and through the Astor Valley to Srinagar.[90] Schlagintweit's famous watercolour painting exposing the south side of the Nanga Parbat panorama as seen by him from the east, from the pass route between the Gurikot and Rupal valleys, conveys the whole magic of the peak with its glaciers bathed in the glow of the early autumn morning light.[91] The romantic effect of the mountain scenery is enhanced by the wild goat (Markhor, *Capra falconeri*), which is inserted in the centre of the painting as staffage. This "true monarch of the mountains" on his way back from Gilgit to Srinagar both in 1889 and again in 1891 was described by Sir Francis Younghusband when seeing it at sunset as "a pearly island rising from an ocean of ruddy light" and when seeing it in moonlight as an experience that "rivalled the Taj Mahal".[92] Praise of Nanga Parbat has been put into verse: "King amidst kingly mountains, Monarch o'er snowy heights, Girdled with glacial fountains, Fenced by avalanche might, Battlements towering skywards, Pinnacles glistening bright, Who shall dispute, Dyamir. The Crown that's thine by right?".[93] Lord Curzon of Kedlestone, who travelled in 1894, also was enthused by "the monarch among the loftier summits, and the sight of his imperial form, as seen from the Indus Valley at Bunji is one of the glories of Kashmir.[94] The first view of the "Dayamur", the Nanga Parbat, as seen from Harpo La, is owed to Alexander Cunningham, who travelled in 1847 through the Astor Valley.[95] This grandest mountain in the world has attracted many mountaineer expeditions, which however failed in conquering its towering dome of ice. One of the experienced mountaineers of his time, Albert F. Mummery (1855–1895), was the first to attack the mountain in August 1895.[96] During his bold ascent from the Diamer flank he and the two accompanying Ghurka disappeared without a trace, perhaps buried by avalanches. This military Gilgit route following Schlagintweit's trail was also used by the German Nanga Parbat expeditions since the first attempt to climb the peak in 1934, which resulted in a tragedy.

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[87] Captain H. C. Marsh gave a lively description of the Gilgit Valley up to Gakuch near the Frontier to Yasin: Marsh 1876, especially p. 136.

[88] Willy 1912, 185: "The other main road from Chitral to India, over the Lowari Pass, through Dir and Swat, and across the Malakand to railhead at Dargai".

[89] Colonel Kelly, at that time in military command at the Gilgit Agency, controlled an area from Astor to Chitral. A report of the Chitral Campaign is given by Thomson 1895 and Wylly 1912, 162–164, 201–210.

[90] The route from Skardu across the Deosai Plain to Srinagar was taken by O. Eckenstein on his return with the expedition of the Royal Geographical Society in 1891 (Eckenstein 1896, 217–240.

[91] The first publication of the watercolour, painted by Adolf von Schlagintweit between 15–19 September 1856 is found in: Finsterwalder et al. 1935, 64 with frontispiece. The original view, which

Kashmir is connected with Leh by the Zoj La Pass,[97] the gateway to Ladakh. It leads through Leh across the Karakorum Pass to Khotan, the most frequented oasis by Indian merchants in Eastern Turkestan. From Ladakh the main western route is opened by the Zoj La (or Dras) Pass to the route via Dras into the Barwai Valley and after traversing the Deosai Plateau into the Satpara Valley down to Skardu or via Kargil along the Indus River into the central basin of Baltistan. The vast tableland of Deosai with an elevation above 4000 m is bordered by the Indus River in the north, the Astor in the west and four rivers in the south, all tributaries of the Indus. It can be traversed only in summer time. Yet, because of its inhabitable stormy wasteland, the Deosai Plateau is called 'Devil's Plains'. The Deosai plains consist of Bara (big)

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seems to be lost since 1856 at least, is also depicted by Kick 1967, 37–42 fig. 4, Kick (ed.) 1996 [?], 15 fig. 4, and Nüsser 2015, 331–333 fig. 11 (with a discussion about the idealized mountain scenery). The eldest known view of the "Dayamur" of 1846 as seen from the Astor Valley goes back to R. H. Bates (Cunningham 1854, 44 pl. 2.).

[92] Younghusband 1896, 188, 254, 300. A earlier lively description of the "stupendous peak Diarmul" Nanga Parbat is owed to Vigne 1844, vol. II, 204.

[93] After Arora 1940, 3.

[94] Curzon 2012, 25.

[95] Cunningham 1854, 44 pl. 2.

[96] Bruce 1931. An appreciation of Mummery's attack on Nanga Parbat is owed to Bauer 1955, 15–24 pl. 7 and 11.

[97] Lawrence 1909, 9–10: From Srinagar to Leh is 243 miles.

Deosai, which measures 20 miles from east to west and 15 miles north to south, and of Chota (small) Deosai. Bara Deosai is entered from the east by the track along the Satpara Lake and through the Ali Malik Mar Pass and slopes into the Astor Valley to the west through the Chachur Pass (4266 m) by Lake Sheosai. A trail branches off the main route to the south across Chota (Chuni) Deosai by the Burzil Pass leading to Lake Wular in Kashmir.

From the southwestern end of the Skardu Basin the ancient paths follow the course of the Indus down to the plain around the confluence of the river with the Gilgit River and to the river crossing at Alam Bridge; the area has been described "as very difficult and dangerous in many places". Even in its upper stretch connecting Kachura with Rondu, the site with a raja fort, there exists no horse-path.[98] In lieu of this road from Kachura with its two natural lakes embedded in a dramatic mountain landscape, an ancient road leads across the Banmok La pass to Astor, where it joins with the Kashmir-Gilgit route.[99]

Gilgit, situated in the centre of the most mountainous region of the Himalayas and a place of great strategical importance, has always served as the "gate(way) to India". The place itself, planted in a fertile oasis, has been described as "a far-flung, disaster-prone and run-down outpost of the Maharajas of Kashmir".[100] It has always been the point from which connection with or control over neighbouring political entities and tribes south of the great ranges could be maintained. Due to its location in the basin at the junction of the tributaries Hunza and Gilgit and about thirty miles away from the main valley of the Indus River, into which the Gilgit River flows, the site of Gilgit from its central position could control or coerce the tribes in the southern independent communities of Kohistan and Yaghistan. Lord Curzon of Kedlestone, who in 1894 undertook a 1200-mile trek through the Indian Frontier region from Kashmir to the Pamirs, called the Dard tribal areas an "outlaw-land, where for hundreds of years, either in the main valley of the Indus or in the lateral ravines, lawless and savage communities have retained an independent existence, a scourge to each other and a terror to their neighbours".[101]

As a main crossing point in this road network (in which six of the nine passes lay within a week's march to reach Central Asia from historical India), this township connects Ladakh and Kashmir with the west and Central Asia with India. "From Gilgit, mountain roads radiate into all the surrounding valleys, and it is easy to see how favourable is its position for the establishment of the head-quarters of a confederacy of small States".[102]

Along the valleys of Gilgit and Ghizer the main transit route leads over the Shandur Pass (3734 m) to Chitral and from there across the Lowaral Pass to the territory of ancient Gandhara with its capital Gandhavati (Puṣkalāvatī or Puṣkarāvatī in Sanskrit), named Peukelaotis (Arr.

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[98] Vigne 1844, vol. II, 304–305. Knight 1893, 83 described the route along the Indus as "perhaps the worst in Kashmir".

[99] Knight 1893, 83–85.

[100] Keay 1979, 2.

[101] Curzon 2012, 14.

[102] Gazetteer 1890, 329.

Anab. IV,7), Peukolaitis or Peukelas by Greek authors, and Proklaïs after Claudius Ptolemaeus.[103] The site is situated at Charsadda on the eastern bank of the lower Swat River, near its confluence with the Kabul River. This kingdom was absorbed by the Achaemenid Empire during the reign of Kyros the Great (559–530 BC) and incorporated by Dareios I (522–486 BC) as its seventh satrapy Gadara. It comprises a region bordered by the Hindukush, and the rivers Kabul and Indus. From the plains around Charsadda (Puṣkalāvatī), Peshawar (Puruṣapura) and Taxila (in Sanskrit Takṣaśilā), described by Arrian (Arr. *Anab.* V 8) as most wealthy and populous that lay between Indus and Hydaspes, close ties were maintained with ancient Bactria (Baxtrish) and Sogdia (Suguda) to the northwest of the Hindukush chains and thus also with the widespread Silk Road system of Central Asia.[104]

3.3 Routes from Chilas to the southern plains

From Chilas in the Diamer District, the third focal point of the Northern Areas, a key route to Mansehra in Hazara leads through the Thak Nala to the Babusar Pass (4173 m), which is situated at a distance of 35 km from the river crossing descending to Thalpan and the Khiner Gah. From the top of the pass, where the territorial borders of Chilas, Hazara and Kashmir meet, the track follows the Kaghan Valley to the south.[105]

Opened in 1892, the road thus forms the second strategic linkage apart from the "Gilgit Transport Road" from the Upper Indus to Kashmir and farther to the southern plains. Algernon George Arnold ("Algy") Durand, the brother of Mortimer Durand – whose name has the evil reputation of drawing up the fatal border between Afghanistan and British-India – who had subdued the mountain states Hunza and Nagar, thus pushing British rule forward to the mountain ridge of Hindukush and Karakorum against Zaristic expansions and also the Shinaki republic of Chilas, forced the opening of this route. Indeed, he believed that it would be the most direct connection between British India and Gilgit, thus being freed of the dependence upon "devious Kashmir officials" and the "inefficiencies of the Srinagar commissariat".[106] The road cuts the distance from Gilgit to the railhead at Hasanabdal and Rawalpindi by almost one-third, and made it possible to order the support of a battalion of regular Sikhs straight from their barracks in Punjab instead of waiting months for half-trained Dogras. This road along the Kunhar River by Kaghan through the wider Thak Gah or the track through the Buto Gah has been described also as the easiest access from the south to Chilas, but is only passable for a short period of three to four months in the year.[107] The Kaghan-Babusar route was also secured by the construction of police stations and rest houses, whose ruins at Besal and Gittidas give evidence of the former busy traffic. In one of the early, more detailed accounts of his ride through the Thak Nala, across the Babusar Pass through the Kaghan Valley to Abottabat, Curzon emphasized that "this route is likely more and more in the future to constitute a line of communication between our outposts in the Hindu Kush and the military bases of British India", "one of the main highroads of communication from India to the Pamirs".[108] The track through the more comfortable Buto Gah, which joins the Kaghan Route at ca. 500 m below the Babusar Pass at an elevation of 3602 m, thus avoiding the steep access to the mountain peak, seems to have been preferred by early travellers and caravans to reach Hazara and the eastern centre of Gandhara, Taxila. There, the southern branch of the Silk Route meets the legendary 'Grand Trunk Road' (GT Road), the present Sarak-i-Azam, which at a distance of 2400 km (1500 miles) connected Peshawar with Calcutta.[109] The place is marked by the Sarai Kala, a Mughal caravan serai of the 16th century. The alignment of the G. T. Road corresponds to ancient routes of mercantile importance, the *Uttarapatha*, the Grand Northern Route, which connected Central Asia with East India as far as the Gulf of Benghal. Starting from the Mauryan capital Pātaliputra (Patna) on the Ganges River, it traversed northern India by Mathura on the Jumna, Sāgala (Sialkot), by the two Gandharan centres Taxila and

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[103] McCrindle 1876–877, 184–185; 1901, 115–117. Curzon 2012, 217–229 gave a detailed description of his travel with Younghusband in 1894 from Chitral Fort across Shandur Pass to Gilgit, passing Gupis Fort and the little state of Punial with Gupis Fort and Cher Kala. For the route from Gilgit and Yasin to Ghizer across Mastuj Pass to Chitral, see Yule 1872, 463. The main route from Chitral across the Shandur Pass to the Gilgit road is described by Anonymous 1895, whom after his arduous travel "Gilgit seemed to us a garden of Eden"; it is also mentioned by Wylly 1912, 185 map no. 5. See also Thomson 1895, 116–155.

[104] + On the Achaemenid satrapies of the East see Henkelmann 2017, Callieri 2023, and Petrie 2020. On Kaspapyros / Charsadda see Pirozzi 2017.

[105] The importance of the Kaghan Valley route in Hazara for the connection of Taxila or nowadays Rawalpindi and Abottabad with Gilgit via Chilas as "sheet anchor" in the "Shinaki country" has been often noted: Biddulph 1893, 15: "from Khaghan in the Hazara country by the Babusar pass to the Indus (Chilas) in seven days, and from Shardi in the Kishenganga valley by the Shoto pass in five days". Normal travel on horseback from Rawalpindi to Gilgit required 23 stages (165 miles). This road as the second main access to Gilgit was opened in 1892, route 37 after Mason 1929a, 66–68. For the former connections, see Gazetteer 1890, routes 1–3 and 11. Thomson 1895, 115–116; Curzon 1896, 18; Durand 1900, 290; Schomberg 1935, 20; Arora 1940, 228–230; Alder 1963, 257–261; Hamid 1979, 163; Haines 2004, 553–554. For a comprehensive overview of the Kaghan Valley, see: Grötzbach 1989.

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[106] Keay 1979, 229. For the connection between Chilas and Gilgit via the Indus Valley (85 miles), see: route 38 after Mason 1929a, 69–71.

[107] Curzon 2012, 231–241 and 243–251 again is owed a detailed account of his ride in October 1894 from Gilgit (with stages at Ramghat, Bunji, Jalipur (Jelliper) and Bunar) to Chilas, referring to the occupation of the village and its fort. The new Chilas Fort he found garrisoned by 400 Kashmiri Imperial Service troops under two British officers. From Chilas he crossed the Babusar Pass, where on its top he observed "four or five stone cairns" still standing today; he reached Abbottabad through the Kaghan Valley after 169 miles. Leitner 1893, 79; Thomson 1895, 116. Practicable for ponies between 1 July and 31 October: Arora 1940, 228–230. Grötzbach 1989, 1.

[108] Curzon 2012, 243–251.

[109] Dar 1994 and 2006, 37, 63–64, 78 [+ Dar 1999].

Gandhavati-Puṣkalāvatī to Puruṣapura (Peshawar), and from there to Alexandreia-Kapisa as far as Bactra (Balkh).

The route was not only the arterial road for mercantile exchange from India to Bactria as far as the Aegean with Seleukeia as nerve centre, but also the track for the armies of Achaemenid kings as well as of Alexander's Macedonians on his march to Taxila, and further Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the Mughals and the British. Near Taxila, on the Tarnol or Margalla Pass of the GT Road, stands the Nicholson Tower, built in honour of General Nicholson, who was wounded there during the First Anglo-Sikh War 1845–1846.

Located north of Taxila is Mansehra, which occupies the connection point from where roads lead to the Indus Route, to Chilas, to Swat or to Kashmir. The strategic importance of this place is marked by the famous edicts of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (268–240 BC), inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī on three rocks at the southern outskirts of the city.[110] The emperor, who called himself Devānāṃ Piyadassi (in Sanskrit Devānāṃ Priyadarśin), was the third king of his dynasty, which was established by Candragupta between 321 and 317 BC after the short episode of Alexander's invasion in Northern India in 327–326 BC. Aśoka, who left behind 14 big rock edicts on the Indian subcontinent and another in Pakistan at Shahbazgarhi in the Mardan District, followed an Achaemenid tradition of the Great King, namely of engraving royal records on rock façades, as for example in Persepolis, Naqš-i Rustam, Bisutun, Susa and Van Kale. The ancient path at the entrance to the gorge of the Buto Gah is accompanied by prehistoric rock carvings, Buddhist inscriptions and stupa images, showing the importance of this earlier main route. Other southern side valleys of the Indus River were also used as connecting passages, such as the Thor Nala, which could be used from the south as a route either to Babusar or across Sapat maidan to reach Jalkot in the lower part of the river valley. From Besham then there is access to the pathway across the Shangla Pass to Swat.

One of the main routes connecting Hazara with the upper Indus region is the ancient "Indus Valley Road", the forerunner of the Karakorum Highway (KKH), as described in 1890. Starting from Thakot [Besham] in the south, the gateway to the KKH, the route follows the Indus with different river crossings up to Sazin in Kohistan, there again crossing the torrent, and from Shatial following the right river bank via Dudishal, Hodar, Thalpan and further continuing to Ges, Darang, Gor to Talish and Bunji, and from there traverses the Sai Valley to Gilgit.[111]

At Shatial, some 3½ miles away from Sazin, where the Darel Stream joins the Indus, there existed a bridge, and 4 ½ miles farther on the right bank from a place which is still marked by ruins of a British post, a raft carried travellers to Harban on the opposite side. Between Shatial and Chilas an ancient route also followed the course of the river on its left bank, whereas contrarily the track from Chilas upstream to Bunji was described as “difficult and almost impassable even for men on foot”, that is until Colonel Kelly with his pioneers during the late 1890ies engaged in road-making between these two important places for the British.[112] The track leading from Chilas through the Buto Gah according to the great number of prehistoric but also of Buddhist images carved on boulders and rock faces accompanying the ancient path seems to have been more practicable in earlier times than the road through the Thak Nala.[113] The long and dense succession of petroglyphs which line the ancient routes on both banks of the Upper Indus River, starting at Shatial, mark “a sort of proto-Karakorum Highway”,[114] leading to the east as far as Raikot Bridge and from there to the confluence of the Indus with the Gilgit River and its branches to Baltistan and the Karakorum passes.

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[110] Discovered in 1889 by a member of the Archaeological Survey of India, first published by Èmile Senart 1888a, 1888b; Bühler 1889, 1890; for the description of the site, see: Falk 2006, 127–129. The other Aśoka edict, the primary source for deciphering Kharoṣṭhī, was the inscription on two rocks close to the village Kapurdigarhi (Garhi Kapura) near Shahbazgarhi in the Peshawar Valley; it is known since 1836: Falk 2006, 132–135.

[111] A detailed description of the 'Indus Valley Route' is given in: Gazetteer 1890, route 1 and 11. See also Durand 1900, map to face p. 136.

4 Routes of Conquerors, Merchants, and Pilgrims

A reconstruction of the early history of this region – where in later centuries “the empires were to meet” – is rendered more difficult by the lack of an indigenous historical tradition based on written documents. Reliable Chinese sources dating from the Han Dynasty (Western Han from 206 BC to 9 AD and Eastern Han from 25 to 220 AD) tell of the nomadic Ta Yüeh-chih, the “Great Children of the Moon”. The first known Chinese travellers to the Western Regions *(xiyu)* were Zhiang Qian from the early Han Dynasty and Gan Ying from the late Han Dynasty. The report of the imperial envoy Zhang Qian, an officer of the palace guard, who was sent “in the third year of the Quianyuan era of the reign of Emperor Wudi” to contact the heads of Central Asian tribes such as the Ta Yüeh-chih around 139–138 BC for the first time refers to historical developments in Central Asia, which also affected the high mountain region of historical northwest India. They were expelled from the steppes of Northwest China by continual migrations of other nomadic groups caused by the rise of the Xiongnu kingdom, and thus turned from Gansu to the south where they invaded Bactria and after crossing the Oxus they settled in a huge territory. Zhang Qian’s diplomatic mission to the Western Regions *(xiyu)* had the aim to win the Yüeh-chih over to an alliance against the fierce Xiongnu nomads. However, instead he and his escort were imprisoned for ten years by them. After several years Zhang Qian reached the final destination, the homeland of the Yüeh-chih, the trans-Pamir regions in the Ferghana as far as the Upper Amu Darya. While the aim of his mission failed, Zhang travelled almost to the outskirts of the Hellenic world, returning thirteen years later in 126 BC to the court, bringing back lively descriptions of the hitherto unknown western countries of Bactria, Anxi (Parthian Persia) and Ferghana. The land between the river was praised for their vineyards and rich fortified towns, where there were bred the fabled "celestial horses that sweated blood". He is considered as the first protagonist of opening the later Silk Routes for Chinese imperial interests. The importance of his diplomatic mission for the imperial court is also evident from the scene of a mural in the cave temples of Mogao, showing the emperor Wudi dispatching his emissary to the Western Regions.[115]

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[112] Biddulph 1880, 15. “The worst road is to Bunji, which is dangerous and often impracticable in many places”: Gazetteer 1890, route 2, p. 6 and route 11, p. 39. About the road-construction between Bunji and Chilas by the 32nd Pioneers under Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly in 1895, see: Wylly 1912, 194, 201.

[113] Dani 1983a, 9–10.

[114] Definition coined by Jettmar 1980c, 186.

There may have been earlier contacts between China and the west, but Zhang Qian's mission is the first diplomatic mission that is historically recorded. Since prehistoric times these routes were part of a far-reaching communication system. The address by the councillor Du Qin (Tu Ch'in) to the supreme general Wang Feng, the all-powerful uncle of Emperor Ch'eng (ruled 51–7 BC), was given about 25 BC (from Hanshu 96A), concerning envoys travelling between China and Chi-pin (pinyin: Jibin). It refers to Kapiśa, at that time a state centred in the region of modern Begram. The address gives an account of the journey's hardships across the mountain pass and represents for the first time a reference to high altitude illness. This tale even found its way into medical literature and described as acute mountain sickness (AMS), which usually develops above the height of 2500 m:[116] "In addition, they (the envoys) pass over the ranges (known as the hills of the) Greater and Lesser Headache, and the slopes of the Red Earth and the Fever of the Body. These cause a man to suffer fever, he has no colour, his head aches and he vomits; asses and stock animals all suffer in this way. Furthermore, there are Three Pools and the Great Rock Slopes, with a path that is a foot and six or seven inches wide (i.e. less than 40 cm wide – these high narrow paths still exist in places and are now known as *rafiqs*), but lead forward for a length of thirty li (almost 12 and a half kilometres) overlooking a precipice, whose depth is unfathomed. Travellers passing on horse or foot hold on to one another and pull each other along with ropes, and only after a journey of more than two thousand li (832 km) do they reach the Suspended Crossing [which I have identified as being in Upper Hunza, in what is now northern Pakistan]. When animals fall, before they have dropped half-way down the chasm they are shattered in pieces, and when men fall, the situation is such that they are unable to rescue one another. The danger of these precipices beggars description".

Later Chinese sources relating to the period of the Chinese-Tibetan conflicts during the 7th and 8th century AD present more details concerning the local principalities in the southwest of the mountain ranges bordering the Tarim Basin and also remark on the dangerous paths leading through these mountains. An important addition to these sources are the accounts of Chinese and Korean pilgrims, who during the first millennium set out for their long and strenuous way to India, the land where Buddha had lived and taught. It was also the home of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites and monasteries with the sacred books written in Indian. They had to be studied and translated into Chinese.

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[115] Cave 323, High T'ang Dynasty: Whitfield – Whitfield – Agnew 2000, 11 with figs.

[116] Hulsewé 1979, 110–111. My thanks to John Hill for his kind reference to this chapter.

With the emergence of states such as the empire of "the Great Kushans" the former trails of migrations were transformed into trade routes, and used by diplomats, missionaries and pilgrims as well. The shortcut through the mountains became most important for the diffusion of Buddhism in Central and East Asia. Such communications brought material gains (new ideas) into the mountain valleys along the main roads, and incited outsiders to participate in this boom, by conquering the area where roads crossed.

The record *Shiji* (chapter 123, the memoir on Ta Yüan) and the later *Han Shu* (Book of Han: chapter 61, the biography of special individuals and chapter 96A and B, the monograph on the Western Region), a chronicle of the former or western Han Dynasty, provide the first sources mentioning the legendary "Silk Road". Its origin lies in the account of the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian, the "pioneer of the Silk Road", who was sent in ca. 139 BC by the Chinese emperor Wudi to the Western Regions to negotiate with the Great Yüeh-chih for an alliance against the Xiongnu.[117] The name Zhang Qian appears in three Chinese inscriptions along the Upper Indus, at Thalpan and Chilas-Jayach and. It is first of all a personal name as the mentioned Zhang Ziqiu in an inscription of Thak Nala, but "it cannot be completely ruled out, however, that somebody wanted to remember Zhang Qian" – the famous explorer of the Silk Road.[118]

The "Description of the Western Regions" (chapter 118) of the *Hou Han Shu*, the History of the Later Han, represents another valuable source about the development of the communication network and the Chinese diplomatic and economic drive to Central Asia. The chronicle, covering the period between 25 and 221 AD, was compiled by Fan Yej († 446 AD) and is based on a record delivered by general Ban Yong to the Chinese emperor.[119]

The main motif for the Chinese expansion into the Western Regions has found different interpretations. Sir Aurel Stein proposed an economic reason as the need to find new markets for the export of Chinese silk.[120]

A similar motivation was seen by other historians, as the conflict of the Han Dynasty with the Xiongnu about the control of the trade routes with the west. On the contrary, a more political and strategical factor seems to have been decisive for the Chinese view of Central Asia with the aim to restrain the Xiongnu influence from the oases as far as the Gansu Corridor and to repel them beyond the Gobi Desert. The attainment of commercial control over trade routes was of secondary importance, but apparently another element of the Chinese diplomacy, i.e. the desire for the 'celestial' or 'heavenly horses', as narrated by Zhang had a role in the whole story.[121]

The term *Seidenstrasse* ("Great Silk Road"), synonymous for a complex network connecting central China through Samarkand at its centre with the Eastern Mediterranean shores, was coined in 1877 by the Prussian Baron Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833–1905), one of the great founders of geography as a modern scholarly discipline. Referring to the description of the overland route by Marinus of Tyre, he introduced the plural form *Seidenstrassen*, because the caravans did not follow just one single track, but "a widely branching and ancient transcontinental network of transportation and communication".[122] Nonetheless, the term and importance of the fabled "Silk Roads" or "Silk Routes" did not become known to the western world until the adventurous journeys of Sven Hedin, a student of von Richthofen in Berlin and Aurel Stein. The Silk Road begins at the imperial capital Chang'an (modern Xi'an in the Shaanxi province), proceeds northwest through the so-called Hexi or Gansu Corridor to the oasis town of Dunhuang (which means 'blazing beacon') in the Gobi Desert. The Hexi Corridor forms the initial stretch from the Chinese heartland on the western frontier of China with its modern-day Gansu Province and the Nigxia Hui Autonomous Region. After passing the famous Jade Gate, *Yu-men-kuan*, the road divides into two main branches which circumvent the sands of the Taklamakan desert, a no-man's land between the great civilizations China and Central Asia with the neighbouring cultures of Iran, Mesopotamia and the Eastern Mediterranean. The desert's deadly perils have been emphatically described by early Chinese pilgrims and by courageous Western merchants and explorers.

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[117] Hulsewé 1979, 24–39. Hill 2003. See also Tsuchiya 1999, 353. Jettmar 2002, 174.

[118] Höllmann 1996, 428–429 footnote 9.

[119] Hill 2009.

[120] Stein 1921, 406.

[121] + Benjamin 2018. See Falk ed. 2015, Source 003 (and 018).

The northern trail leads across the desert towards Hami. Then hugging the foothills of the T'ien Shan, where irrigation from glacier-fed streams such as the Tarim River enabled human habitation, it follows the line of the oases, which were threaded like a string of pearls along the northern outskirts of the Taklamakan, passing through Turfan, Karashahir, Kuča, Aksu, Tumchuq to reach the trading centre of Kashgar. The southern route followed the track between the northern barrier of Tibet and the desert's end, passing the oases of Miran, Endere, Niya, Keriya, Khotan as far as Yarkand. Both caravan routes are reunited in Kashgar by a connection around the western outskirts of the Taklamakan. From the caravan centre the Silk Road continued westwards, starting with a long and perilous ascent of the High Pamir, here leaving Chinese territory behind, continuing via Khokand, Samarkand, Bokhara, Merv through Persia and Iraq, to the Mediterranean coast.[123] Yarkand at the end of the southern route is also the starting-point for caravans travelling to Balkh in present-day North Afghanistan, or crossing the hazardous Karakorum passes, the gates of India. The most eastern Karakorum Pass leads via Leh to Kashmir or to India, the Kilik or Mintaka passes through Hunza or the Baroghil Pass to the "Gate of India" important Upper Indus routes.

The great network of trade routes which connected China with the Mediterranean world and all lands between these two corner points of Eurasia at an extension of more than 7000 kilometers came to life since the emergence of the Achaemenid Empire and the expansion of the Greek-Roman world to the east. The catalogue of entries of Han Shu (chapter 96A) provides information about the existence of two routes leading around the Taklamakan desert to the Western Territories and of the communities, states and tribes settled along them. The entries in chapter 96 also contain references to five states of the Western Regions lying beyond the western end of the Northern and Southern Routes, noting their distance to the Han capital Ch'ang-an: Chi-pin, Wu-i-shan-li, Anhsi, Ta Yüeh-chih and K'ang Chü were not subject to Han authority of the protector general (this post was established in 59 BC), because of their "long distance beyond the range of Han troops".[124]

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[122] Parzinger 2007, 7.

[123] For an overview of the trade routes in Eastern Turkestan between the downfall of the Mongolian Empire (14th century) and the arrival of Portuguese missionaries (17th century), see: Hayakawa 2015.

Through the celebrated astronomer and geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus (from Ptolemais in Egypt, 150 AD) an elder, now lost itinerary by the Roman geographer Marinos of Tyros was known, in which a western merchant expedition to the remote country of Serica (China) was recorded.[125] The agents of the Macedonian merchant Maës Titianos in the first half of the 1st century of our era travelled from Syria through the Parthian Empire and Baktra to the important centre of the Sogdiana at Marakanda (Samarkand) and from there along the Pamir route to a place called the Stone Tower (πύργος λιθικός, *turris lapidae* after Ptol. *Geog.* I, 298). This fort has been placed in the state of Hsiu-hsun, described in the list of western territories, chapter 96A of Han-shu, at sites such as in the Alai Valley or even Tashkurgan in Xinjiang.[126] This place seems to have been one of the most important stages on the trade route between Bactra and the land of the Seres. The account was a first glance beyond the Stone Tower and at the wide region between Pamir and Emodus (Himalaya) and formed the imagination of the immense extension of Asia to the far east, thus eliminating the idea of a universal surrounding ocean.

The southern branch of the "Silk Road" led from Guma (Pishan) in the Tarim Basin (west of the famous trade centre Khotan), through Yarkand, Tashkurgan (Wu-ch'a) and Langar across the south-western mountain chain of the Hindukush and Karakorum to *Nandou* and to a kingdom called *Ji-bin* (Chi-pin). As described both in Hu Han Shu and Han Shu, the Ji-bin Country is reached from Pishan, between Kargalik and Khotan, from where the so-called Jib-in Route branches of the southern route of the Silk Road to the southwest. Before the T'ang period (618–907 AD) this route was the most frequently used connection among all other linking roads between China and India, because it enabled direct access from the southern Pamir region to Kashmir and Uḍḍiyāna, i.e. Swat.

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[124] Hulsewé 1979, 54–55. The state of Wu-i-Shan-li adjoins Chi-pin in the east and seems to be a transliteration of Alexandria ή εν Άρίοις, i.e. Herat (*ibid.*, 112–115). The state of An-his with its capital Fan-tou or Po-tou corresponds with Parthia (*ibid.*, 115–118). The Central Asian states of the Ta Yüeh-chih, a land of nomads, is situated in Badakhshan (*ibid.*, 109–123), and of the K'ang Chü, the Stone Country, is located in Samarkand (*ibid.*, 123–131).

[125] Ptol. *Geog.* I, 11, 6. McCrindle 1901, 12–13 footnote 9, 18–19 footnote 16. Herrmann 1910, 19 [+ ? HH notes include also Herrmann 1922]. The state of Wu-Ch'a adjoins Nandou in the west and was located in Badakhshan, in Sarikol south of Yarkand or in Tashkurgan (Hulsewé 1979, 98).

[126] Stein 1933, 47, 126–132 referred to a place near the village of Chat in the Alai Valley at the route leading to Irkeštam at the Sino-Russian border. See also Herrmann 1938, 103 and following pages. Summarized by Hulsewé 1979, 138 footnote 355.

"One starts in the south-west of Pishan, passes through Wu-cha, crosses the Suspended Crossing, passes through Ji-bin and then arrives in Wu-i-shan-li Country after travelling for over 60 days" (as recorded by Xiyu Zhuan in Hu Han Shu: Yong 152). The same direction of the route is recorded by Du Qin's account under the heading "Ji-bin Country" (see above, and fn. 116).[127]

Ji-bin, first mentioned in Zhang Qian's Han Shu, chapter 96a, has been identified for the period of the early Han Dynasty up to the beginning of the 4th century AD with the western Gandhara region of Kapiśa with its city Kāpiśī (Panjshīr-Ghorband valley below Hindukush) and Puruṣapura (Peshawar).[128] The later capital of the Kuṣāṇa (Kushans) is located forty kilometres north of Kabul in the Panjshīr-Ghorband Valley below the Hindukush.[129] Ma Yong in his reading of the famous Chinese inscription at the 'Sacred Rock' of Haldeikish in Hunza Valley [Table 30.1], mentioning a delegation of the Da Wei (Great Wei), presumes at this place a "necessary staging post on the ancient "Ji-bin" route":[130] "Gu Wei-long, envoy of Da Wei (is) now dispatched to Mi-mi". The title 'Da Wei' after him refers to the North[ern] Wei Dynasty (365–380 AD), but other Chinese palaeographers on the basis of linguistic arguments prefer a dating to the earlier Cao-Wei Dynasty (220–264 AD).[131] The name, which appears only in this inscription, is not mentioned elsewhere. The country Mi-mi or Mi, which belongs to the "Western Territories", is not recorded in any Chinese sources before the period of the North Wei. Annals then mention that "the states of Fergana, Ji-bin and Mi-mi sent envoys to the court to present tributes respectively", and also other sources note diplomatic and economic relations between Mi-mi and the Northern Wei Dynasty beginning with emperor Zheng-ping (451 AD).[132] The Haldeikish inscription near Hunza is therefore the only historical record of Sino-foreign relations outside the Chinese realm, when within the time between 444 to 453 AD Gu Weilong used the ancient route from China to Ji-bin and Wu-i-shan, established since Han period.

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[127] Hulsewé 1979, 110–111. Cited and commented by Jettmar 1987a, 95; 2002, 174–175 and Yong 1989 [1986], 151–152.

[128] The different identifications of Ji-bin with an area south of the Hindukush and west of the Indus have been discussed by Hill 2009, 489–499. Ji-bin (Jimi in Waiguo Shi) in accounts of Buddhist monks from China between 4th – 6th centuries included a wider area than Gandhara, comprising also Kashmir (Kaspiria) and possibly Tokharistan. Since the T'ang Dynasty, the early 7th century, Ji-bin indicated Kapiśā (Kashmir): Chavannes 1903–1904, 336; Stein 1907, 53; Petech 1950, 63–79 (see Hulsewé 1979, 104 footnote 203); Chattopadhyaya 1967, 12. Yong 1989 [1986], 151–153; Deeg 2005, 245. Benjamin 2007, 110–111 identified Ji-bin with the modern Kashmir, which was controlled since the 1st century by the Indo-Scythians. The changing localizations of Ji-bin with "Greater Gandhara" and the course of the Jib-in Route according Chinese records are summarized by Li 2008 and 2014, 295–299, 657–693 and 721–736.

[129] + Begram. On the archaeological site of Begram see Morris 2020 and 2021 with references.

[130] Yong 1989 [1986], 141–150 refers to two "Great Wei" dynasties, which sent envoys to the "Western Regions". The first is known as the Cao's Wei Dynasty (220–265 AD) during the period of the great states, the second as North Wei Dynasty (386–556 AD). Li 2014, 733 fig. 3 follows the interpretation of Yong. For a short assessment of the inscription, see: Litvinskij 1989, 29.

[131] Höllmann 1996, 427 footnote 7.

Jettmar suggested that the Chinese delegation would not have taken the arduous detour by crossing the Karakorum to reach Mi-mi (i.e. Mâymurgh after Arabic geographers), a town southeast of Samarkand in Sogdiana. This because from the Hunza Valley the delegation would have faced another crossing of the Central Hindukush, followed by further crossings of the Tienshan and Alai[133] It would mean another place "somewhere in Gandhara, in the mountains between Swat and Kashmir". Yet, an explanation for such a time-consuming roundabout way could be that the direct access to Sogdiana was controlled by the Hephtalithes and therefore blocked for the Chinese delegation. Mi-mi apparently is the Central Asian state located in the north of the middle Syr Darya at the road from Samarkand to Kashgar (Shu-le).[134] During the later Han Dynasty the state of Ji-bin has been located in Kashmir (Kaspiria). Because of its geographical location Ji-bin controlled the main communication routes from China into northwestern India and thus also the access to the southern branch of the Silk Route.

The other territory of Nandou (Vanda / Banda) mentioned in the Han Shu (chapter 96A) is said to have been subject to Ji-bin. The "kingdom", whose name disappeared from Chinese sources after the Han period while incorporated during the 5th century into the great kingdom of Bolor, was situated in the northeast of Ji-bin and has been referred to the valleys of Swat and Chitral as far as Mastuj or with an area encompassing evidently Wakhan and the plain of Gilgit with Yasin and Hunza or most recently was located "on the lower course of the Gilgit River".[135]

This route from the Sarikol-Pamir region (Śaraḍūgä / Śarakūgä), perhaps starting at Khotan or Kashgar, to Kashmir (and India) seems to have been frequently used as demonstrated by a Khotanese Saka document, which was found at Dunhuang. Instead of trying to use the other important Karakorum passes of Kilik or Mintaka and to pass through the Hunza gorge, the traveller got to Gilgit in a rather roundabout way to the west. After crossing the Wakhan corridor and traversing apparently a Karakorum pass like Baroghil and Darkot or Irshad and following the track through the valleys of Yasin or Ishkoman and Gilgit the traveller entered the district of "Prushava", the region previously called Bruža.

"There the head of the Golden Water issues. There is the first town *Syadiṃ* by name; on the mountain top are three *saṃghārāmas* (Buddhist monasteries). From there six days by land is a town *Baurbura* (Bubur) by name. A great river *Sīna* by name exists. There men cross on *byaḍa* (rather by raft than on a bridge). Four *saṃghārāmas* are there, beside the river are village quarters. From there southwards along the river the great city *Gidagitti* (Gilgit) by name. There are eight stone *saṃghārāmas*. The king's residences are there, in four districts. From there southwards along the river is the road to Indian country. Along the Golden River (Indus) there upon the river bank is a great city *(kṣīra)* called *Śīlathasa* (Chilas). There beside the river are village's quarters. Upon the river bank are pomegranate trees. Afterwards they cross over by *byaḍa* (bridge?). From *Sīḍathasa* to *Ttīḍī* (*tartiya-, crossing-point) eight days (on) land southwards, along the river are walnut-trees, and *banāva*-trees. Then also are *devadāru*-trees. There monkeys live. The *Ttīḍī* (bridge) is called Mangala Cakra. That is the first Indian city towards Kaśmīra. On a mountain is one (*saṃghārāma*?) southwards on the Mahuvi river bank". The itinerary, which describes in a few brief sentences a traditional route between the Silk Road "southward to the Indian country": along the 'Golden River', the Indus, was written in a middle Iranian language during the reign of the Kashmiri king Abhimanyugupta (958–972 AD).[136]

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[132] Wei shu, chapter 4B, Shizu record and Bei Shi, chapter 97, Xiyu Zhuan record: see Yong 1989 [1986], 145–149.

[133] Jettmar 1989c, LIII, 1993a, XIII–XIV.

[134] For the localization of the Mi Country, see: Sverchkov 2009.

[135] For Nandou: Hulsewé 1979, 103. P'iankov 1994, 43–44. Tsuchiya 1999, 353–354; Sen 2003, 3–4, 27, 246 note 6. Benjamin 2007, 109–110. Hill 2009, 499–501.

The most terrifying and extremely arduous path at the end of this route was also described in later Chinese accounts as *xuandu*, the "Suspended Crossings" or "Hanging Passages". But it is still controversial whether these "Hanging Passages" are the same as those mentioned by Han Shu. The geographer and historian Albert Herrmann (1886–1945), the outstanding explorer of the Silk Routes, stressed their different location and tried to identify the Ji-bin track leading from the Kilik (4755 m) or Mintaka Pass (4629 m) or the Shimshal (4787 m) at the present-day Chinese-Pakistani border and the Hanging Passages along the narrow precipices of the Hunza Valley, where the ancient routes are still visible. The "twelf marches between Baltit and the Mintaka Pass" with its terrifying gorges has been described by C.P. Skrine "as difficult a tract of country as can be found anywhere in the world".[137] Parts of the ancient cliff paths above the Hunza are still preserved. However, most scholars localize this route in the narrow and often adventurous mountain pathways cut into the slopes of the Gilgit Valley or above all in the Upper Indus gorges. The traveller marching from the Raikot Bridge to Sazin in Indus Kohistan [Table 1] constantly had to cross and to recross the river either by rafts or rope bridges.

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[136] Bailey 1936, 1968. This Khotan-Gilgit-Chilas-Kashmir-North India route kept its importance for the trade between China and India until the Song Dynasty (960–1126): Sen 2003, 171 map. 4.

[137] Skrine 1925, 232. Herrmann 1935, 34 map 16. Jettmar 2002, 174–181. Benjamin 2007, 107–109 identified the "Suspended Crossing" with one of the Karakorum passes leading from Wakhan (?) to Gilgit. Jettmar 1987a, 2002, 174.

5 Three Chinese Pilgrims

5.1 *Faxian and his visit at To-li/T'o-leih*

Records of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims provide a description of Buddhist India and also of the mountain areas in its northwest between the early 5th and 8th century, whereas Indian sources remain silent. After the first known Chinese mission to the Western Territories *(xiyu)* by the celebrated imperial envoy Zhang Qian, who during the early Han period stayed few years with the Ta Yuezhi and came as far as Bactria and the Ferghana, it was Faxian who ventured into remote regions as far as India. The less known envoy Gang Ying, sent by the imperial court in the late Han period 97 AD on a mission to the Roman Empire, mediated a deeper insight into the political situation in Central Asia. He crossed Anxi, the Parthian Empire, as far as the western coast of the Caspian See from where he returned to China. The routes followed by Zhang Qian and Gang Ying were apparently known to the pilgrim Faxian, who mentions both predecessors on their paths to the Western Territories, but not reaching the Hanging Passages of the Sindhu *(xindu)*.[138] His travel should open a new chapter of Chinese Buddhism with the search for the original roots of this religion. In his following the number of pilgrims towards India increased during the T'ang period. After a long period of ca. 700 years these pilgrimages ceased in the Song period due to the decline of Buddhism in historical North India, caused by ethnic and political changes along the Upper Indus and the intrusion of Islam. The itineraries written by the known Chinese pilgrims Faxian (travel 398–412), Song Yun (travel 518–522), Xuanzang (travel 629–645), Huichao, Wukong (travel 751–790), who travelled through the Karakorum region to India refer to the gorges of the Indus as the most difficult part of their pilgrimage.

Faxian (Fa Hsien) (317–420 AD),[139] whose original family name was Gong, a Chinese monk of the (Eastern) Dong Jin period, set out on his 15-years long pilgrimage (398–412 AD) from his residence town of Chang'an (modern Xi'an in the Shaanxi province), the later Chinese capital of the Chou, Ch'in and Han dynasties. During the T'ang Dynasty (618–907 AD) the place developed into a prosperous economic, cultural and political centre, with a settlement area of ca. 77 km and a dense population of more than one million, including different ethnic groups, thus representing then the flourishing focal point of the medieval world.

Faxian travelled with his four companions most of his way by foot through the Hexi Corridor, but did not follow the traditional way along the southern or the longer northern route around the outer periphery of the Taklamakan Desert. From Dunhuang he took the so-called middle route to Loulan (Shanshan) towards Qarašahr (Yanyi), where the road joins with the northern route. Instead of following the northern route, perhaps for unsafe political reasons, the pilgrims had to choose the arduous track in southwest direction across the Taklamakan towards the southern route to get to the major oasis in the southern Tarim Basin, Khotan (Gostana, in Hou Hanshu: Kingdom of Yutian). Faxian gave a vivid account of the kingdom with its fourteen large monasteries 'without counting the smaller ones'. From there he continued his pilgrimage to Kashgar, where the northern and the southern branches of the Silk Road rejoined. Faxian then went southwest to India with the aim of searching for authentic texts from the Buddhist canon unknown to his countrymen.[140] His sojourn through India occurred during an era of political consolidation and cultural revival under the realm of the Gupta Dynasty. Its ruler Candragupta consolidated the empire by pacifying the areas, which his father Samudragupta had conquered. Faxian arrived in the country of Zihe, and travelled farther to the south, reaching the country of Yuhui in the "Congling range". After crossing the "T'sung-ling" or "Congling range", the "Onion Mountains" (perhaps the eastern Karakorum), he and his fellow-travellers entered the Buddhist kingdom Jiecha (Kie-cha) after 25 days in ca. 400 AD. This country is described as mountainous and cold, and can very likely be located in Baltistan.[141]

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[138] Zhang Mo and Gan Ying are misspellings of the names: Beal 1869, 21–22 and Legge 1886, 26–27. Deeg 2005, 519.

[139] Deeg 2005, 27–29 on the basis of Faxian' personal account, investigated the duration of his life with his birth between 336/340 and 341/345 and the year of his death between 418 and 423 AD.

From there he proceeded westwards to a small kingdom that he called To-li / T'o-leih (Ta-li-lo according Xuanzang), which he reached in one month. This Buddhist place of pilgrimage was famous for its eight *zhangh* or twenty-four metre-high statue of the messianic Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, made of carved and gilded sandal wood.[142] The miraculous figure is described as standing beside a large *saṅghārāma,* which is held by a congregation of monks, all students of the Hīnayāna, the 'smaller conveyance' or "Lesser or Smaller vehicle". It describes the earlier form of Buddhism – in contrast to the later categories of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna or the 'great conveyance, the "Great Vehicle" –, in which only a few beings spiritualize the germ of potential Buddhahood. Both 'vehicles' were paths, narrow or wide, leading to the same Nirvāṇa. With regard to the erection of the figure, Faxian mentions a Buddhist saint, an *arhan* or *arhat*, named Madhyāntika. “Through his supernatural power (he) took a clever artificer up to the Tuṣita heaven (the heaven presided over the Maitreya), to see the height, complexion, and appearance of Maitreya, and then return and make an image of him in wood. First and last, this was done three times, and then the image was completed”. Faxian praised the miraculous image: “On fast-days it emits an effulgent light. The kings of the (surrounding) countries vie with one another in presenting offerings to it” (after Legge 1886, 24–25). The wondrous statue in bent-leg posture is said to have been a model for similar monumental Buddha figures, even in remote Transhimalayan regions such as in Yun-kang (Vungang) in China.[143] According to the time of Faxian’s visit the monastery with its Buddha figure could have been founded at least during the 3rd century AD. The erection of this most revered ancient Maitreya image in India, which was known and celebrated in China, marked the beginning of the extension of the Buddhist faith to the East. Other mentions of this colossal figure exist, such as by the Chinese monk Bao-yun who had accompanied Faxian.

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[140] Record of Buddhist kingdom by Chi Fah-Hsian: Beal 1869, 18–20 and 1884, XXIX. Legge 1886, 24–29; Deeg 2005.

[141] [+ Here HH added: "Zihe (wohl nicht Xihe, Zihe=Shahidulla [= Xaidulla, Shahidula] was a Buddhist kingdom (identified with Karghalik / Kargiliq [Kageleke] by Chavannes 1907?) (stimmt nicht)". Addition: the titles of the chapter 4 and paragraphs 4.1–3 have been rephrased]. The pathway across the "Congling mountains" – Karakorum or Pamir-Hindukush – that was traversed by Fa-Hsien is in dispute: summarized by Curzon 1896, 241–242. Jiecha has been identified mostly with Taškurgan, but also with Kashmir, Ladakh, Skardu or Baltistan (as earlier proposed by Klaproth [+ in 1826? The point is not clear. Perhaps HH refers to Rémusat and Wilson 1838, 112]; and Watters 1904–1905), see: Deeg 2005, 99–109. Its location at Skardu in Baltistan has recently convincingly been proposed at Shigar by Deeg 2000, 884; 2005, 102–110 [+ see Hakal 2021]. Kuwayama 2006b, 112 fig. 5.1 rates Fa-Hsien's itinerary as "almost identical" with that of Zhimeng: "Departing from Kiecha (Qisha of Zhimeng), Faxian crossed over the Pamirs to enter Tuoli". "Then he went southwest for fifteen days along the foot of the mountains to reach modern Swat".

[142] + In theory, if the sculpture was a work of Madhyāntika, the disciple of Ānanda who is said to have brought Buddhism to Kashmir, it should have been very ancient instead.

To-li or T’o-leih after Faxian and Ta-li-lo according to Xuanzang have been usually located within the western side valley of the Indus River called Darel belonging to Darada, the country of the ancient mountaineers, the Dardae.[144] The identification of Darel, “one of the Dardu districts on the Indus”, as “an exact transcription” of the name Toli / T’o-leih, goes back to Major General Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893), since 1861 the archaeological surveyor to the Government of India, used the itineraries of Faxian and Xuanzang as a guide to identify the various sacred places, monasteries and stupas in historical India. In 1871 he was appointed first Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India until his retirement in 1885. During his journey of 1913, when he travelled from Kashmir via Chilas to Hodar into the valleys of Khanbari and Darel, Sir Aurel Stein tried to locate the place of the gilded Maitreya statue in the village Phuguch (Pouguch)[145] in Darel, where the Buddhist sanctuary seems to have been replaced by a Muslim *ziyarat*.[146] He also saw in the carved decorations on this sanctuary and other vernacular mosques the survival of traditional Gandharan motifs. But all attempts to identify ruins of a "trapezoidal compound" above Pouguch in the Darel Valley as the location of an important Buddhist monastery, where the famous statue was being venerated, have failed.[147] Above the village Pougouch on a hill in the middle of the 40-km long valley Stein noticed remains of a fortified place which he called Lohilo-kot. This site, now known as Raji Kot, has even been declared as the seat of the local ruler of Darel. Yet, in spite of all efforts since Stein, followed by field investigations of a team of the Italian Archaeological Mission, of a Japanese team under Haruko Tsuchiya, and of the PGAM ('Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas') no architectural structures were revealed, which could be identified with the expected sacral centre of supra-regional importance.[148]

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[143] Seckel 1962, 139; 1992, 222 footnote 21.

[144] Cunningham 1854, 2; 1871, 82–83; 1924, 95. Since then the identification has been adopted and repeated by most authors. Beal 1869, LXVIII–LXIX, 18–19 identified “To-li with the Tha-li-lo (Dhalila) of Hiouen-Thsang” and further with the town Dhir near the river Tal. Biddulph 1880, 110–112 (To-li, or Tha-li-lo, must certainly be Darel or Gilgit), Beal 1884, 134 (finds To-li to be Daril or Darail in the Dard country), Curzon 1896, summarized the contradictory geographical identifications mentioned in the pilgrim’s travelogues and locations of Ta-li-lo (To-li). In his posthumous book (Curzon 2012, 234) he notes: Darel “is believed to be the To-li and Ta-li-lo of the Buddhist narratives”. See also Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33. Watters 1904–1905, 239, Chavannes 1907, 433 and Stein 1907, 9; 1921, 6; 1928, 21–23, 30–31; 1942, 54–55, Petech 1950, 17, Ganhar – Ganhar 1956, 205, Rosenfield 1967, 230–231, Kuwayama 1987, 711, Carter 1990, 30–32, Tissot 1991, 102–103, Tsuchiya 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2005b, Li 2008, 27, Filigenzi 2015, 123, 131. Stein 1928, 31 even located the place of the colossal Maitreya statue in the village Phuguch (Poguch) in Darel. Referring to the location of “a little kingdom called To-li”, Raverty 1878, 298 points more cautious to “Honz, Balti (Bolor) or Yasin” [+ see Hakal 2021, and Hakal 2022].

[145] +On Phuguch, see also Jettmar 1961a, 85–86.

However, the early conjectural identification of To-li / T'o-leih (Ta-li-lo) with Chilas of 1839 has been disregarded by the following historical research.[149] It was T. G. Abaëva who in 1975, unaware of Stein's arguments, again called forth the problematic identification with Darel, on the basis of the apparently striking accordance of both names, and thus proposed Chilas in lieu of Darel.[150] Her main argument against Cunnigham's first identification was that the actual distance given by Xuanzang for the route between Swat and Darel is by far too short.

The sacred place of To-li according to the pilgrim Faxian's account apparently lies on the left bank of the Indus. From here, the first known Chinese traveller to the area went during a 15-day long journey to the kingdom Uḍḍiyāna, i.e. Swat, after he had passed the dangerous "route of hanging chains" in the stupendous gorges of the Indus of present day Indus Kohistan. From there at last he travelled to Gandhara. A reference to the localization of the "Suspended Crosses" is perhaps indicated in an inscription in Shatial, if the interpretation as

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[146] Stein 1928, 31–32.

[147] Tsuchiya 2005a and 2005b.

[148] Gnoli 1980a and Tusa 1985, 183. Tsuchiya 2005b and 2006.

[149] Wilson 1838, 114 resuming M. Abel Rémusat's conjecture to identify To-li with Dardu, the capital of the Dard country (Rémusat 1836).

[150] The identification with Darel was placed in question by Abaëva 1975, 159 pleading instead for Chilas as conjectured on the basis of Rémusat's edition of Faxian's *Foe-koue-ki* (relations des royaumes bouddhiques) by Wilson 1838, 114. According to Jettmar 1975, 200, 296; 1977a, 148; 1977b, 417–419; 1979b, 45; 1980a, 9–11; 1984a, 178–180, 212; 1985, 762; 1995, 38–39; 1997, 85–86, 90–91; Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 19; 1987, 19–20, and Dani 1983a, 3–4, 50–52, 1983c, 90–91 and 1995, 15 stressing "the problematic character of this identification" with Darel, Ta-li-lo would cover more easily "a much larger area" than Darel, and therefore corresponds to "the whole of the Chilas zone". Kuwayama 2006b, 112 also located "Tuoli" (Dareda or Darada) around Chilas. An alternative location for Ta-li-lo at Shatial was discussed in MANP 2, 1997, 85–86, 90–91 (Jettmar), 83 (Fussman), 104–105 (Bandini). But, no archaeological proof exists for tracing this important bridge head in Indus Kohistan the "center of Faxian's kingdom Tuoli", as also assumed by Deeg 2005, 111–112, 189.

Guozhai pass is not only “questionable”. Namely, Höllmann and Jettmar[151] have considered Faxian coming from Baltistan, perhaps traversing the ‘snow mountains”, the Deosai plains, through Astor. According to his report he did not cross the Indus before he entered T’o-leih, which obviously was situated on the left shore of the Indus River. Against the identification of Darel with To-li another argument is convincing: Xuanzang reports “proceeding east of Ta-li-lo across mountains and gullies, going up the Indus, by flying bridges over precipices, a journey of about 500 li brought you up to the Po-lu-lo country”, i.e. Bolor. The distance between Bolor and T’o-leih (one month’s time) given also by Xuanzang is twice as long as between Darel and Swat (15 days). The traveller would hardly return from Darel to the Indus Valley, because the track even on the left side of the river was difficult before the ‘Indus Valley Road’ was constructed. Indeed, no really passable ancient footpath existed between the mouth of the tributaries Tangir and Kandia along the northern Indus bank for travelling through this narrow gorge downstream to Besham, from where a direct connection leads over the Shangla Pass (3734 m) downwards into the Swat Valley. Even the way on the left bank was difficult before the British Indus Valley road and the subsequent modern KKH were constructed. From Darel Faxian / the traveller would have gone over the known passes to Tangir via Satil and then Kandia, finally reaching Kalam in Swat. The direct passage from Darel to the Gilgit Basin would also not lead through the gorges of the Indus.

5.2 The pilgrimage of Song Yun (Sung Yün)

The same “southern route” of the Silk Road and the pathway through the T’sung-ling mountains, the Snow Mountains, was taken by another Chinese pilgrim named Song Yun (Sung Yün). He was sent as an envoy by the empress Dowager (Tai Hau) of the Great Wei Dynasty in 518 AD. This period was marked by political upheaval in the Upper Indus Valley (Hsin-t’ou), when the region was under the supremacy of the Hephthalite kings. After crossing the Tsung Ling mountains (Hindukush?), Song Yun and his monk companion Hwui Seng entered the stony land of She-mi (Chö-mi) (Chitral), and from there went via Po-lu-lo to Wu-ch’ang (Uḍḍiyāna). On their way they had “to cross iron-chain bridges across bottomless mountain chasms”. The dangerous travel is described quite dramatically in his travelogue with similar descriptions as by his forerunners:

“From the country of Po-lu-lai (Bolor) to the country of Ouch’ang (Uḍḍiyāna) they use iron chains for bridges. These are suspended in the air for the purpose of crossing. On looking downwards no bottom can be perceived; there is nothing to grasp at in case of a slip, but in a moment the body is hurled down 10,000 *fathom*s. On this account travellers will not cross over, in case of high winds”.[152]

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[151] Jettmar 1987a, Höllmann 1996, 430.

[152] Beal 1869, 188.

His official visit in Puṣkalāvatī and Gandhara (Kan-t'o-lo) was "to obtain Buddhist books in the west". In his accounts, he presents a vague description of the political situation in the Northern Areas, mentioning the land of Po-lu-lai, i.e. Little Palūr, usually located around Gilgit.[153] On the contrary, until now there are no substantial archaeological or epigraphical vestiges in Darel that would support Cunningham's outdated assumption.

5.3 The illustrious pilgrim Xuanzang

In Xuanzang's travelogue his route from Swat to Ta-li-lo can clearly be traced: "Going northwest from the town of Mung-kia-li (modern Mingora), crossing a mountain and passing through a valley, we reascend the Sin-tu River. The roads are craggy and steep; the mountains and the valleys are dark and gloomy. Sometimes we have to cross by ropes, sometimes by iron chains stretched *(across the gorges).* There are foot-bridges (or covered ways) suspended in the air, and flying bridges across the chasms with wooden steps let into the ground for climbing the steep embankments. Going thus 1000 li or so, we reach the river valley of Ta-li-lo, where stood once the capital of U-chang.na. This country produces much gold and scented turmeric. By the side of a great [monastery] in this valley of Ta-li-lo is a figure of Maitreya, carved out of wood".[154] Xuanzang following the reverse direction than Faxian, thus starting from Mung-kia-li, the capital of Uḍḍiyāna, which is probably modern Mingora in northern Swat, would follow the most reasonable stretch to reach the Upper Indus Valley at Besham by traversing the Gilgit chains across the Shangla Pass (2814 m). His way along an arduous route through the gorges in Kohistan could have led him to the basin of Chilas-Thalpan. This place by virtue of the striking assemblage of elaborate Buddhist carvings and inscriptions with devotions to Buddha and the location of a monastery was apparently a sacred place of supraregional importance. A later literary hint corraborates the proposed localization at this place of the wondrous Buddha figure. An "Idol of Shamil called Śārada", which was bypassed by the Indus River, before its exit from the mountains, was mentioned by the Arab chronicler al-Bīrūnī in the 11th century and may thus be a late reminiscence of the wooden Maitreya described by Faxian (Fa-Hsien)[155] and Xuanzang: "In Inner Kashmir, about two or three days' journey from the capital (the city of Tāneshar) in the direction towards the mountains of Bolor, there is a wooden idol called Śārada, which is much venerated and frequented by pilgrims". Shamilan would therefore include Chilas, and it seems more likely that T'o-leih (Ta-li-lo) would cover more easily "a much larger area" than Darel, and therefore would correspond to "the whole of the Chilas zone" with its political centre at Chilas and the corresponding Buddhist sanctuary at Thalpan across the Indus.[156]

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[153] Yang Hsüan-chih's account [+ Lo-Yang ch'ieh-lan chi], see: Chavannes 1903; Watters 1904–1905; Jenner 1981, 261; Jettmar 1980a, 10 and 2002, 118–119; Dani 1995, 15–18 map 3 and 2001, 144–145.

[154] Beal 1884, 133–134.

[155] Sachau 1888, 117. Said 1989, 203. Jettmar 2002, 154.

This identification is supported by the great number of inscriptions containing also names of monks or pilgrims. Of particular significance are the numerous images praising Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara / Padmapāṇi, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī, and respectively the future Buddha Vipaśyin and Śākyamuni at Chilas-Jayachand and in Thalpan expressing pious devotion to Buddha, "which become more dense and more carefully executed the closer to Chilas (and Thalpan) they are found".[157] According to Dani the depiction of "three Bodhisattvas appear to have attained prominence differently in the eyes of different persons. It is very likely that sectarian developments had already started and the followers turned their faith towards one or the other bodhisattvas according to whether they belonged to one or the other school".[158] From the preference of the bodhisattva images his cult occupies a prominent place in local Buddhism. The singular wealth of Buddhist imagery around Chilas and Thalpan gives evidence of the predominance of this doctrine, which is well-founded by the ruling Dāradas kingdom.

The same area, here called Po-lu-lo, is also mentioned by the third renowned pilgrim of the T'ang Dynasty called Xuanzang Sazang (ca. 602–664 AD). His famous travelogue *Da-Tang xiyu ji*, "Records from the Regions West of the Great T'ang", which was compiled by his disciple Bianji, describes the countries and city-states along the caravan routes through Central Asia and across the Hindukush to India. This Chinese Marco Polo, also designated as Buddhist Pausanias, travelled between 629 and 645 AD to India, the holy land of Buddhism.[159]

Xuanzang Sazang symbolizes the cultural exchange between the two great Asian civilizations, China and India. He set out for his travel from Chang'an (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi), the capital of the T'ang empire, for Anxi, the administrative centre of Dunhuang, the gateway to the western regions and to the junction of the Hexi Corridor to the Silk Road system.

His famous pilgrimage is even portrayed in paintings, such as those in the Mogao cave 2 of the Eastern Thousand Buddha Grottoes at the small oasis Dunhuang at the westernmost end of the Gansu Corridor in the vast Gobi Desert.[160]

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[156] Deeg 2000, 884–885; 2005, 101–120, 517–518 confronts Faxian's description of his route with the different identifications since Cunningham.

[157] MANP 6: Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Chilas Bridge 63:4, 13; 84:2), Maitreya (8:1; 63:6; 64:19), Mañjuśrī (6:2), Śākyamuni (64:14, 20), Vipaśyin (64:16), and seated Buddha (65:1). Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 19; 1987, 19–20. See also footnote 95, Curzon 2012, 25.

[158] Dani 1983c, 90–91.

[159] Watters 1904–1905; Hiyarama 1999; Dani 1995, 18–21 map 3 and 2001, 39.47–48.146. A vivid description of Xuanzang's pilgrimage is owed to Wriggins 1999 and 2004, 67–70 map 4.1. For a map of the routes taken on his pilgrimage, see: Kuwayama 2006b, 112, 120 fig. 5.4 and Li 2008, 24.

[160] Dating to the period of Western Xia (1036–1227): Chung 1994, 185 pl. 55. See also a Japanese copy of the 13th–14th century in National Museum Tokyo: Hiyarama 1999, 69 pl. 204. Seckel 1997, 274–275 footnote 146, fig. 231 classified the form of traditional representation as an ideal portrayal of Buddhist clergymen in narrative action scenes.

A wall painting renders Xuanzang's return from India with the great white elephant given to him by the illustrious king Harṣa or Harṣavardhana (606–647), a follower of the Mahāyāna Buddhism, who united northern India und moved his residence from Thānevar north of Delhi to Kanauj, the new great metropolis. The ideal portrait of the great sūtra translator shows him on his way back to China, heavily loaded with sûtra scrolls on his back. From Dunhuang he travelled along the northern route to Samarkand, to Baktra (Balkh), the capital of Bactria ('Daxia' in Chinese), and at last to the kingdom of Bāmiyān, where he spent 15 days. This valley, called Fanyuan, is described as the political and religious centre of the kingdom of Bāmiyān. We owe him the first and also the most authentic description of the colossal Buddha figures of 53 m and 38 m height, sheltered in niches.[161] After traversing the Khyber Pass he reached Gandhara and its eastern part the Swat Valley, and from there he came into the upper Indus region. He passed on his 16,000-km and seventeen-year-long pilgrimage "vast plains of shifting sand" and crossed "bridges of rope and iron chain" or "bridges spanning precipices by means of pegs for steps".[162] Like his predecessor Faxian, he praises again the miraculous power of the gilded timber statue of Maitreya erected near "a great monastery" in the "Ta-li-lo valley, the old seat of government of Uḍḍiyāna". Like Faxian he described the Buddha also as a being the work of the Arhat Madhyāntika, who converted Kashmir to Buddhism. Xuanzang is owed not only a description of the geographical position of the 136 different countries and towns he had passed through and their political status. He also provides information about the situation of Buddhism in its home country India. At last Xuanzang returned to his home using the southern branch of the Silk Road.

6 An Epilogue with Marco Polo

A clear division between the two kingdoms of Little Bolor (Palūr) and Great Bolor (Palūr), which is usually identified with Baltistan (Tibbat-i Khurd), is reported by another pilgrim, the Korean Hye Ch'o (Huei Ch'ao).[163] He was descendant of the Korean kingdom of Silla (Xinluo) and active in propagating Tantric Buddhism in China during the reign of emperor Yuanzong in the T'ang period. On his pilgrimage to the five Indian countries, he travelled between 723 and 729 AD, when Great Bolor was under Tibetan predominance – ca. 720/721 AD – and Little Bolor belonged to the Chinese sphere. In his report he mentions that the king of Little Bolor, who originally had his seat in Great Bolor, fled to the Gilgit region after the Tibetan invasion in 678 AD. The mountains around Little Bolor are described as having only burnt tree stumps and no other vegetation.

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[161] The two stone Buddhas were destroyed on 26 February 2001 by the Taliban, at that time the fundamentalist Muslims rulers in Afghanistan. The visit of Xuanzang in Bāmiyān and the chronology of the colossal figures are discussed by Tanabe 2004.

[162] Beal 1869 and 1911; Watters 1904–1905, I. 239–240. Iron chain suspension bridges are mentioned especially for the western mountain region between Gilgit and Swat: Deloche 1984, 67.

[163] His "Memoir of a Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India" was found in Dunhuang by Paul Pelliot in 1908: Fuchs 1939, 20–22. Yang – Jan – Iida – Preston 1984, 47–48.

The Pamir route via Chitral was taken in 751 AD by the Chinese pilgrim Wukong, who also entered the Wakhan Corridor through the Hexi Route. He visited the sacred place of Uḍḍiyāna (Swat) as well as Gandhara, where he converted to Buddhism.[164] During the first millennium the region from the eastern Hindukush, the Karakorum and the western Himalaya clearly display intense integrating links. On the contrary, with the decline of Buddhism in the following period from 1000 to 1500 this area is characterised by an obvious isolation, and only few chronicles are available.

The above mentioned Khotanese "Saka itinerary" outlines an apparently frequently used connecting route between Sarikol *(Śaraḍūgä/Śarakūgä)* and the centres of the Silk Route such as Kashgar or Khotan, through Wakhan and across the Barogil or Irshad Pass into the Yasin Valley to "the great city of *Gīḍagīttä*", *i.e.* Gilgit. There the traveller found four Buddhist monasteries, built of stone. The region was divided into four districts and governed by a king. From there the route leads to India over the next noted and for the first time termed place, the 'great city' *Śīlathasa/Sīḍathasa*, Chilas, which is situated on the bank of the Golden River *(ysarnīji ttājä)*.[165] Before the end of the 10th century Buddhism was still prevalent, as the aforementioned monasteries demonstrate. But in Chilas there is no mention of them. Scanty, but nevertheless relevant information about the political situation in the Northern Areas is obtained in the geographical compendium *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, "the regions of the world", which was compiled by an anonymous in 982/93 AD and dedicated to the Amīr of the local dynasty in Gūzgānān, in what is now northern Afghanistan. In "Bolorian Tibet *(B.lūrī)*, a province of Tibet, adjoining the confines (ḥudūd) of Bolor", "the people are chiefly merchants and live in tents (khayma) and felt-huts (khargāh). The country (*Pu-lu* in Chinese sources) is 15 days' journey long and 15 journeys' wide". Great Bolor, i.e. Baltistan or Little Tibet, is clearly seen as separate from the "vast country" Bolor *(Bulūr)*, Little (not Lesser) Bolor, the region around Gilgit (*Nieh-ho-to* in Chinese), which was reigned by a king "who declares that he is the Son of the Sun". "In this country there is no salt but that imported from Kashmir" *(sic)*.[166]

The places of Gilgit, but also of Chilas are again mentioned in ca. 1030 by Al-Bīrūnī, *Gīḍagīttä* and *Śīlathasa* as Shiltās / Shilathās. Gilgit-*Gīḍagīttä* apparently was the ancient name of this centre as mentioned in the inscription of Hatun and the "Saka itinerary". Under this name it remained the capital of the region during the period of the Trakhan Dynasty. Therefore, the statement of Hashmatullah Khān that the original name of the town was "Sarjan or Sargan" and that later it was called "Gilit" is incorrect.[167] Biddulph also followed this version, that the ancient name was Sargin, later changed into Gilit, and finally by the Sikh and Dogra conquerors into Gilgit.[168]

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[164] Lévi – Chavannes 1895, 348. [+ Here HH left a side note: "Jettmar 2002, 116: Palola Sahi"].

[165] Bailey 1936, 1968, 70–71 pl. 52–54. Jettmar 2002, 144–145. Hinüber 2004 [+ here HH left a side note: *hier weitere Zitate*].

[166] Minorsky 1937, 93, 121, 369–370. [+ see also Taylor 1902].

[167] Hashmatullah Khān 1987 [1939], 678–679. Dani 2001 [+ ?], 37, 162–163.

Mirza Muhammad Haidar, a commander of the Chagathay-Moghul khanate who had participated in a raid into Baltistan in 934/1527/28, reports that "not one" of the inhabitants of Bolor *(Bulūr)* "has a religion or creed". Until 1530 this wide region of "infidels", a *Kāfiristān*, from Chitral, Gilgit to Baltistan "did not constitute a part of the Muslim world".[169] On his travel to the court of the Great Khan at Beijing, Marco Polo passed Badakshan *(Badascian)* through Wakhan to Kashgar in 1271. In his itinerary *milione*, the Venetian makes mention of Bolor. "The people dwell high up in the mountains, and are savage idolators, living only by the chase, and clothing themselves in the skin of beasts. They are in truth an evil race".[170] Typically enough the Venetians took the same route along the Silk Route as the pilgrim Xuanzang, but in the opposite direction. It is inconceivable that Polo's caravan should have made such a long detour through a rough and dangerous terrain across the Hindukush or the Bolor mountains, the Karakorum. Thus, the description of the savage idolators would be more likely true of the inhabitants of Kafiristan than of Baltistan, which usually is designated as Bolor still inhabited by Buddhists. He names a dark-skinned population with an own language living in a province called "Pasciai", some ten day's journey south of "Badascian", present-day Badakshan in Northeast Afghanistan. Marco Polo may have been knowledgeable of the Pashai, who had their seats south in the lower Hindukush outskirts to the south of Nuristan, the former Kafiristan.[171] The region called "Greater Kafiristan" would extend from Nuristan in eastern Afghanistan to that of the Kafir Kalasha in Chitral and farther up to the Upper Indus Valley. Therefore it has been supposed that this information could only have been obtained through hearsay (Jettmar 1965, Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 22).

Baltistan, also termed as "Little Tibet", *Tibbat-I khurd*, in contrast to Great Tibet, i.e. Ladakh, actually came under Muslim rule for the first time, when it was governed from Kashmir between 1548 and 1850. In the following decades local principalities there gained power.

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[168] Biddulph 1880, 20.

[169] Holzwarth 1998, 300–302. See also Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 33–37.

[170] Yule 1903, 172. Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 22, 30.

[171] Wutt 1981, 16.

II Archaeology and Anthropology in the Northern Areas

1 Introduction

Besides the pilgrims' accounts and Chinese historical records, another group of monuments turned out to be a major source of information about the historical development in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region which until 2009 was called the "Northern Areas of Pakistan". These are the open air rock art galleries located directly on the routes between High Asia and the Lower Indus river plains and which, to some extent, coincide with the 751 kilometer-long Karakorum Highway, colloquially designated 'KKH'. The highway was opened in 1978 for the international traffic and finally completed in December 1979.[1] In this region we find one of the world's most extensive collections of ancient images and inscriptions carved into steep rock faces, on reefs and on boulders, which because of their special glossy surface of desert varnish are suited for artistic expression. There are parts of the Indus gorge and its side valleys, where there are no such rock surfaces – or only few – to which engravings or paintings could be applied. These rock art galleries are unique in their iconographic and cultural diversity and historical expressiveness. The Russian Vladim A. Ranov enthusiastically considered the newly discovered rock art province, "that nowhere in Asia was it formerly possible to identify such distinct and well-defined historical groupings of petroglyphs and to relate them to individual stages in the development of one of the routes in the Great Silk Road" – its 'tavern register', as Jettmar wittily described its wealth of imagery and epigraphic record. "Not a single other Asian region knows such a variety of subjects, or such a great number of rock engravings for that matter".[2] Regarding the earlier recording of Asian petroglyphs he stated, that the new rock art province will be better documented than those in the other regions of the Central Asian mountain belt. Due to its geographical variety the high mountain region never showed a monolithic historical unit or homogeneous civilization, but instead revealed a manifold differentiated historical cosmos with borders and far-reaching contacts which underwent constant metamorphosis. The exemplary importance of the rock art as a historical source is invaluable, because it together with the epigraphic records of the Kashmir bronzes and the famous Gilgit manuscripts represent the only available medium to reconstruct the historical and cultural development of the region, in particular the establishment of the dynasty of a local dynasty, the Palola Ṣāhi, which governed the kingdom of Bolōr from the fifth to the beginning of the 8th century AD. The epigraphic and iconographic records are a singular witness also to ethnographic, economic, social, religious and artistic issues that otherwise are nearly unknown. They offer also insight into the cross-cultural configuration of the different route networks, thus allowing us to see the exchange of concepts and visual forms that were channelled along these arterial roads.[3] Assemblages of carvings such as those in Yasin clearly represent the southernmost expansion of a Central Asian cultural complex or an identical entity with local elements. On the other hand, the Northern Areas also evidenced the northernmost extension of new elements in the imagery originating from the southern lowlands. Yet, the regions around the lower part of the Upper Indus River valley, Kohistan and Diamer District, the valleys around Gilgit, and Baltistan reveal in their imagery in spite of corresponding motifs and themes a distinct local character and expression, which reflect the ethnic plurality, and diverse cultural and political developments in these regions. But, only a series of systematic excavations in sites could help us to refine the vague chronology still further.

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[1] King 1989.

[2] Ranov 1989, 39. On the distribution / absence of petroglyphs, see Allchin 1987, 139

Numerous pictures of strongly simplified animals and humans are found along the belt of the Indus, but also in higher concentrations on rocks around pastures in the higher mountains or along tracks in the side valleys. Apparently, they were produced by herdsmen and hunters; according to the different stages of repatination they can be considered as pertaining to a pastoral tradition, widespread throughout the mountain areas from Central Asia to the Caucasus. Neither the patina nor the simple execution of this kind of images enable sufficient anchoring points for an approximation to particular period. Peter Snoy, a member of the 'German Hindukush Expedition 1955–1956', saw during his ethnological studies in the Bagrot Valley near Gilgit, herdsmen producing images of ibexes still in the same primitive manner.[4]

The images are incised into the rocky slopes and boulders of granite in the Indus gorge, starting at the important river-crossing near Shatial, where the river enters the narrow gorges of Indus Kohistan up to Raikot Bridge, where the river bypasses the Nanga Parbat massif. An ancient path along the left steep bank of the Indus is marked by smaller groups of rock carvings, which mainly originate from post-Buddhist times. Larger accumulations with images of singular mastery and iconographic expression are concentrated around the Partab Bridge and Pari Das on the right bank and on the route leading from the Rondu Gorge to the Alam Bridge, at the junction of the rivers Gilgit and Indus, and farther along the Gilgit River and its side valleys of Ghizer, Yasin, Ishkoman and Hunza. Rock art assemblages are found along the Indus in the Rondu gorge as far as Baltistan, and farther to the east also along the Shyok River and in Kharmang to Ladakh and Western Tibet. Between Shatial and Raikot these carvings line as narrow belt the ancient main route along the right bank of the Indus River. This principal route, as described in detail in the Gazetteer of 1890, was also used by the British military force under the command of Sir George Scott Robertson, later British

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[3] + Here HH added the following annotation: "Comparable to the milestones along the Roman road system they are archetypal artefacts, a multi-faceted source for the historical routes of travel, toponymy, political history and history of religions." The notes were preceded by a quotation of Filigenzi 2015 with reference to the topographic distribution of the rock-sculptures of Swat.

[4] Snoy 1975, 224 fig. 110.

Political Agent at the Gilgit Agency from 1894 to 1896, on his four-day march from the fort of Bunji through Gor amd Ges to Thalpan in November 1892.[5] During the campaign against the Chilasis and Thoris with their allied Shinaki tribesmen, which ended in the capture and burning of the town in March 1893,[6] his *sepoys* had to cross the Indus by raft, since a ferry only existed between Thalpan and Chilas. There by contrast in Medieval times a bridge existed to cross the "Golden River" from the "great city of Silathasa", as mentioned in the itinerary of the Khotanese Saka from the 10th century.[7] As in Chilas-Jayachand, important river crossings such as those at Shatial, Basha West, Thor, Hodar [Hodur], Gukona, at the important bridges for the Kashmir-Gilgit transport route at Partab Bridge and Alam at the confluence of Gilgit and Indus or Kuno Das at the confluence of Hunza and Gilgit rivers are marked by assemblages of rock carvings and inscriptions.[8] Between Shatial and Chilas in the past there was a main route lined with rock carvings and inscriptions on the southern bank of the Indus.[9]

A particularly high concentration of rock carvings exists on a long stretch of ca. 100 kilometres between the mountain-barrier narrowing the Indus gorge west of Shatial and the Raikot Bridge. The centre of these rock art galleries is concentrated in the widened basin of Chilas and on the opposite terraces of Thalpan. There and around other settlements such as Hodar [Hodur] and Thor, at presumed monasteries and important river crossings, larger accumulations of carvings are found. Other concentrations of early prehistoric petroglyphs seem to mark hunter camps or communal meeting places for festivals of ritual procedures. Smaller clusters of petroglyphs, normally not of such elaborate execution, also occur along the ancient pathways in the side valleys of the Indus, such as Buto Gah and Thak Nala and in higher mountain basins. The more favourable environmental conditions along the river gorges of Indus Kohistan, an area with a higher degree of precipitation which favoured dense vegetation, prevented ancient peoples from producing petroglyphs. Their absence on the steep rocky slopes of the narrow gorges west of Shatial can be explained by the fact, that this part of the Indus Valley was not used as a main route to the southern plains.

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[5] Gazetteer 1890, route 11 and index map. On Robertson's campaign against the Chilasis and their Shinaki allies mainly from Thor, Darel and Tangir, but also from Sazin, Jalkot and Palas, see the contemporaneous accounts: Robertson 1892, Durand 1899, 280–290, Curzon 2012, 236–239, India Intelligence Branch Division 1907, 31–37 and Bruce 1910, 198–211. Comprehensive: Dani 2001, 263–264, 267. In February 1893 "after a great rising of the Indus valley tribes" and the following besiege of Chilas which resulted in the final defeat of the Shinakis, Chilas was permanently occupied by the British (a garrison of 400 Imperial Kashmiri Service troops) and an assistant political agent was appointed there in the fort. During the burning of Chilas, the mosques were spared, to respect "the religious sentiments of the people" (Robertson 1892). The final occupation of this strategical position opened – in addition to the Kashmir-Gilgit road – a second and shorter connection with the lowlands, the Abottabad-Chilas road through the uplands of Kaghan and across the Babusar Pass.

[6] According to Biddulph 1880, 15, the community of Chilas embraces six valleys and "can furnish 1500 fighting men". The town itself has 140 houses. Mulla Ata Muhammad 1876 in Gazetteer 1890, route no. 2, p. 4 and route no. 11, p. 39 mentions the number of 1200 houses with a fort. Curzon 2012, 240 refers to 800 houses in "the main village of Chilas". The British fort was built by the 23rd Pioneers in 1894 [+ N.B.: Curzon 2012 is a new edition of earlier texts by Lord Curzon edited by D. Anjaria].

[7] Bailey 1936, 262.

[8] Deloche 1973 and 1984. Jettmar described the different traditional possibilities to cross the Indus by raft, "cradle bridge'" rope-bridge or suspension bridge as noted by the Chinese monks Faxian (Beal 1869, 21) and Xuanzang (Beal 1884, I: 133) and girder bridge: Jettmar 1978.

[9] + Also here HH wrote down some notes: "Shinaki republic of Chilas and Gor. Chilas Wazarat included also the villages around Astor."

There are also areas with rock paintings, such as in the rock shelters around the Kotah Valley in Swat.[10] In the Northern Areas until now only few painted rock shelters have been recorded in the Khanbari Valley, at Gitile near Gorabad, near Barikot,[11] at Gurikot in Astor, and in Kharmang in Baltistan. Smaller sites of rupestrial art are found around Gilgit, such as Kuno Das, Barmas, Sakarkoi, Guwachi, and in Ishkoman. The so-called "Sacred Rocks" of Haldeikish near the village of Ganesh in the Hunza Valley, with their carvings showing ibexes, hunting scenes, and inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Sogdian, Bactrian, Tibetan and Chinese represent one of the most important epigraphical monuments in the western Karakorum.[12] It is also the northernmost site with such an assemblage of petroglyphs. The other important sites with concentrations of inscriptions are located around the Alam Bridge and at Shatial in Indus Kohistan, a district belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Found at this important river crossing were approximately 600 inscriptions in Iranian besides 15 inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and 410 in Brāhmī. With more than 550 in Sogdian, nine in Bactrian and two in Middle Persian and Parthian respectively, they represent the most important Iranian epigraphical complex in the Northern Areas. Altogether more than 50,000 rock carvings and 5000 inscriptions are estimated to exist in this mountain region. Until 2009 ca. 288 archaeological sites including 151 rock carving assemblages had been surveyed. These sites comprise 6854 stones and rock faces with 44,387 petroglyphs enclosing 5259 inscriptions, and their number is increasing every year as a result of further exploration.

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[10] Olivieri – Vidale 2006. [+ Rock painting zones have been documented also outside Swat, for example in the Oghi District of Hazara Division in the Black Mountains (see Payr 2012) and Mt. Karamar in Swabi (Olivieri 2012)].

[11] [+ Not to be confused with the ancient site of Barikot in Swat, or the later village of Barikot in the Kumrath valley (Panjikora, Dir), or modern Barikot on the Kunar River in Afghanistan. The long fortune of the toponym has been addressed in Callieri – Olivieri 2021, 357]. Rock painting zones have been documented also outside Swat, for example in the Oghi District of Hazara Division in the Black Mountains (see Payr 2012) and Mt. Karamar in Swabi (Olivieri 2012).

[12] The rock carving site of Haldeikish was shown to Jettmar and Dani by Suleiman Shah in 1979 during their visit to Hunza: Dani 1985a.

A world-wide phenomenon in prehistoric art is designated as ‘cup-marks’ or ‘cupules’, hemispherical or conical percussions that appear on rock surfaces or on megaliths. They are arranged in rows or sometimes grouped to geometrical figures or complex networks with interconnecting grooves on mainly horizontal rock surfaces near carvings. The function of the intentionally made cupules has been attributed to symbolic procedures, but also associated with more utilitarian activities, such as game boards of travellers and shepherds. In the case of cupules inside painted rock-shelters, the cavities may have been used for grinding the pigment. This characteristic variation in rock art is found at many sites along the Upper Indus, but also in Swat in association with painted rock-shelters.[13] They are found also in the Tanawal Area of Mansehra District, in Sindh and Balochistan.[14] With regard to the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, J. H. Rivett-Carnac in 1870 for the first time pointed out cup-marks in the Himalayas and Central India and their similarities with other cup-marked rock monuments of the world.[15]

In most regions of South Asia where there are suitable rocks, an indigenous tradition in rock art emerged already in the early period of hunter-gatherer, as in Balochistan, Sindh, Central Asia and in the high mountain regions of Pakistan. The hot and desert-like sandy environment in parts of the Upper Indus region produced the typical dark brown varnish-like coating, covering the surface of the rocks, which easily could be engraved with pointed stone instruments or metal chisels. The technique is based on the fact that percussion creates capillary fissures on the rock surface, making it appear lighter in colour at the point of application. This effect is most striking on rocks of the Upper Indus region, which through their dark-brown shiny surface virtually attracted early artists ever since the Stone Age to apply this technique. The ca. 1-mm thick desert varnish, also called rock varnish, occurs world-wide on rock surfaces in arid landscapes. It is “neither a weathering rind nor patina, but a unique subaerial sediment from an arid environment that is subject to continuing change”.[16]

The techniques usually employed to produce images and inscriptions in these rocks occur also in other rock art provinces in the world.[17] Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar described these different techniques applied for Indian rock engravings, with stone implements comprising 'battering' or hammering, or 'bruising' by a more cautious procedure of engraving lines formed by pecking, mere 'grooving', and 'incising' with sharp stones.[18] For the production of a group of animal images the earliest artists used different techniques: After the draughtsman had bruised or incised the contour of the figure, he filled the interior body by hammering or abrading the patina and grinding the deepened surface. Metal chisels seem to have been used since the early first millennium BC, especially for the delicate Buddhist images and inscriptions. The most elaborate masterworks of the Buddhist period, the outstanding stereotyped images of Buddha and stupas as well as particularly the jātakas and episodes of Buddha's life, must have produced by using stencils or tracings drawn out in Indian ink on paper, cloth or silk fabric. Their use for designing cave paintings is known from Turfan, where this kind of artist's aid with pieces of tracings were found in the corridor near the "library" at Kocho.[19]

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[13] Olivieri – Vidale 2004, 140–150, 164–170; Vidale – Olivieri 2005, 451–453; Olivieri 2006, 146–153; Olivieri 2015a, 92–93: The dating of the cup-marks might be attributed to a by far wider chronological range, than has been proposed between 6th – 5th century BC and 1st – 3rd century AD (ibid. 93). [+ On the cup marks in Sindh, see the most recent publications by Zulfikar Ali Kalhoro (e.g. Kalhoro 2018)].

[14] Tor Derai, Loralai District, Baluchistan: Qamar 1986, 175 Pl. 53b. – Sindh: Kalhoro 2013b; 2014b.

[15] Rivett-Carnac 1877 and 1903. Kumaon Himalaya: Mathpal 1995, 66 fig. 56a–b.

[16] The process which formed desert varnish is intensively discussed by Biedermann 1976, 143–144; Whalley 1983 and Garvie – Burt – Buseck 2008.

[17] Dunbar 1941, 19–25. See also Engelmayer 1965, 59–60. In his study on rock-art of Lower Nubia J. H. Dunbar presented a list of ten techniques which could have been utilized [+ this sentence was originally in the main text].

There are only very few places, where drawings were applied to the rock surface in mineral paint, such as in Khanbari Valley and Gor. Their isolated occurrence there has been explained by the lack of caves or rock-shelters in the region between Shatial and Raikot. In the mountains between Malakand and Swat painted shelters [20] represent an artistic phenomenon, which complement the extraordinary devotional rock reliefs of late Buddhism.[21]

2 Early Archaeological and Historical Research in the Northern Areas

The magnificent Buddhist reliefs near the village of Manthal above Skardu [Table 34], the capital of Baltistan, and of Naupura in the Kar Gah (Kar Valley), around 7 km west of Gilgit, were known to the scientific world since the years 1836 and 1876 respectively. The huge granite rock of Manthal is located at the foot of a scree at the outlet of the Satpara Valley, which descends from the plateau formed by the picturesque Satpara Lake to the Skardu Plain to the south. The 6-meter high rock marks also one of the ancient main routes connecting Baltistan with Astor across the Deosai Plateau. The relief displays a sitting Buddha surrounded by a square array of twenty similarly depicted, seated Buddhas in earth-touching pose, forming a mandala (or *dkyil 'khor* as mentioned in the second Tibetan inscription). The accompanying Tibetan inscriptions were noticed by Godfrey T. Vigne, the first European to reach Baltistan in 1835, as early as 1836 and again during his second visit in 1838.[22] In his *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo'* he described the granite rock with "a sitting figure in relief of Siva or Mahadeo, and an inscription in the character known as the "old Buddhu stone [...] calling upon passers-by to pay their adoration, and to keep the little lamps alight in the niches cut in the stone". In two reports published in 1836 and 1838 he presented for the first time a facsimile of one of the four inscriptions "at the base of a mutilated image of Buddha", and after his second visit at the granite rock he reproduced a new copy with a translation by Alexander Csoma de Körös, the pioneer of Tibetan studies in Ladakh, who lived there between 1820 and 1830. Durand published a photo of the rock in 1899.

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[18] Wakankar 1984. See also Jettmar 2002, 86–87.

[19] Ruin K: Le Coq 1913, 8 pl. 45 e. Le Coq 1924a [+ ?], 7–8.

[20] Olivieri 2015a.

[21] Filigenzi 2015.

[22] Vigne 1836, 1838 and 1844 vol. II, 261.

However, western learned society owes the first more detailed notion of this extraodinary monument to a most remarkable traveller, Lady Jane Ellen Duncan. She was born in 1848 in Glasgow and died in Naples in 1909 after becoming ill on board the steamer during her last travel from Bombay to Mombasa in East Africa, and from there to her home in England. She was "of Welsh descent, so that she inherited the Celtic enthusiasm and idealism combined with the industry and tenacity of purpose of the Lowland Scot". Her report *A Summer Ride through Western Tibet*, the first edition published in 1906, was praised as "one of the most delightful books of travel it has ever been our good fortune to come across".[23] During her first visit in Skardu in 1904 she recorded a careful description of the monument, the about 6-metre high Buddha at Sadpor (present-day Satpara). She also made new copies of the three Tibetan inscriptions, which are carved below the relief of the Buddha seated on a lotus, surrounded by twenty likewise enthroned smaller Buddhas, forming a square, and on each side of the square flanked by two colossal Bodhisattvas. After her return to London Lady Duncan submitted the copies of the inscriptions to scholars in London and Paris, but lastly she had to contact Francke in Ladakh, who immediately sent "a competent Tibetan from Khalatse to Sadpor" along the rough and arduous tracks through the river gorges and across the Chorbat La, to make new transcriptions for the following translations and commentaries.[24] She also noted the corresponding carving of a seated Buddha with a standing Bodhisattva on each side of him, but this part of the left end of the rock, there more than 3.50 m high and at a right angle of the front relief, is overgrown with lichen, so that this carving is not easily seen.

Lady Duncan described also the ancient dam of the Satpara Lake with its double sluice-gate regulating the outlet of the "Sadpor" rivulet. According to local information, the upper gate was originally decorated with two small Buddha figures, which had been removed by a Gurkha regiment when it left Skardu years before her visit. She was also told by locals that the barrage and the sluice-gates were built by the last Buddhist Raja of Skardu, who according to Hashmatullah Khan[25] could be identified as the Maqpon Bokha.[26] He ruled, according to his record, between 1490 to 1515 and is said to have established Skardu, thus being the real founder of the state of Baltistan. The story whether the damming of the Satpara Stream was his work "will probably remain obscure for ever". The damming of the Satpara Stream was assigned by Hashmatullah Khan to ʿAlī Sher Khān Anchan, the great king of Skardu (1595–1633). It was built of "large stones and hard lime mortar and had three openings for drawing water". As "a magnificent feat of engineering, this dam stands to this day as a tribute to the effort and industry of this great ruler", but later "it has fallen in disrepair".[27] Obviously according to the vague historical sources and the poor architectural description, the hydrology works at Satpara seem to have been constructed in Buddhist times and enlarged and connected with the irrigation system in Skardu in a later period, perhaps under the rule of ʿAlī Sher Khān.[28] He founded several settlements and built fortresses on main routes, such as in Kharmang leading into the Skardu plain, for the protection of his kingdom. The large fort Chensa Nala, the snow leopard's place, above Lake Satpara had to close the access of the route traversing the Deosai Plain to Skardu. Ali Sher's Ladakhi queen Mandok Gyalmo is praised with having erected Mandok Fort below Kharpochea Fort at Skardu and to have secured its water-supply by planning the water channel with an aqueduct built of huge cyclopean stones.[29] The legendary Raja of the Maqpon Dynasty, who founded several settlements and built fortresses for the protection of his kingdom, among others, in Kharmang, was famous for his victorious conquests of Ladakh and Dardistan. Therefore the title *anchan* i.e. Azam, "The Great", was bestowed upon him.[30] His name is glorified also because he established friendly diplomatic relations to the ruler of Gilgit, on the one hand, and to the great Moghul's court in Delhi, on the other hand, after emperor Akbar had conquered Kashmir in 1589, and he was thus able to repulse an invasion of emperor Jahangir's army. The relief of the eight-foot-high, standing Buddha at Naupura – also known by its ancient Sanskrit name Yagini Pitho – below the site of a Buddhist monastery displaying "four Chogtens (*mChod-rten*) close together in a line" was first described in detail by John Biddulph in 1876.[31] But it was mentioned even earlier by Muhammad Siyar, a chronicler at the Chitrali court, in his Sha-nama, which was completed in ca. 1812.[32] In this epic poem about a hunting party which was performed by Guri Tham, the ruler of Gilgit, for Muhtaram Shah II, the ruler of Drasan in Upper Chitral, a "terrifying and wonderful statue", a "picture of a giant", which "is the same as the idol of Bamiyan", was shown to the Shaheen Shah in a valley near Gilgit. The relief in local traditions was regarded as a giant female demon banned into the rock by a holy person or as a giantess called Yāthini,[33] the sister of the cannibal king of Gilgit, the fabulous Śirí Badát, a descendent of evil spirits or giants. According to this local legend his residence was in a castle near Naupur, from where his rule extended as far as Astor and Chitral. Ghulam Muhammad conveys another variant of this legend. Yāthini, being a man-eater, "was in the habit of killing and devouring half as many of the men as happened to pass by (the rock), leaving the other half unmolested. The princess continued this practise [...] until a certain Danyal named Soglio [...] devised a successful plan of murdering her in order to save his beloved countrymen". There are different versions about this either demonised or as supernatural being, idolized tyrant, who according to Hashmatullah Khan's chronicle lived as the last indigenous Buddhist ruler in Gilgit from 1080–1120, obviously a fictitious date.[34] The rather soft modelling of the figure's body suggested also an interpretation that the figure should represent the daughter of Buddha.[35]

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[23] Her memoir is shortly described in Duncan 1906.

[24] Durand 1900, 128 with fig.; Duncan 1906, 297–303 with frontispiece. The Tibetan inscriptions "from not later than 1000 A.D." with the new translation of Francke were included (Duncan 1906, 300–302). See also De Filippi 1924, 66–68, Francke 1926, II 186, Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, 74–75 pl. 14. The inscriptions no. I–IV have been recently transcribed and translated by Schuh 2013. A photo of the Buddha rock from 1956 is published in: Gattinger 1961, 19 fig. 3.

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[25] Al Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan, *Mukhtasar Tarikh-i-Jammu riyasat hai maftuvah Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur wali Jammu wa Kashmir waqsaya Tibet* (A short history of Jammu and Kashmir and other conquered states and of the area of Tibet), part IV and VI, was first published in Urdu at Lucknow 1939 [Reprinted under the title *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, Lahore 1969]. It is the most important source about the history of Baltistan; see the translated version by A. Nayyar: Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939]. He served as governor, *wazir-i-wazarat*, of Ladakh and Baltistan for the Dogra government of Jammu-Kashmir, first in Gilgit and later in Leh. He wrote his narration in Lucknow after his research in Baltistan, including the *Shahgharnama*, a chronicle in Persian from the court of Imam Quli Khan of Shigar from ca. 1700. Dani 2001, 167, concerning the history of Gilgit notes, that this part "is very brief and faulty", based "on his old incomplete notes" without any later review.

[26] Duncan 1906, 306. After Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939], 9–10 Bokha shifted his residence from Shikri to Fort Kharpochea, towering above his new capital Skardu. See also Dani 2001, 218.

[27] Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939], 19.

[28] See also Emerson 1984, 105 footnote 18.

[29] A short description of the Kharpochu Fort and the construction of the water channel with the aqueduct of 2½ m length by the queen Gul Mandok is given by Dani 1989, 118–120.

[30] Duncan 1906, 303–307. Francke 1926, II 186–187. The date for ʿAlī Sher Khān Anchan's reign as maintained by Hashmatullah 1987 [1939] 1987, 19 and Dani 2001, 221 is historically not reliably tenable. The accession to the throne is dated to 1591 and the year of his death is indicated for 1622/23; see also Schuh 2011, 410–413.

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[31] Naupura-Buddha: Biddulph 1880, 108–112 with fig. page 108–109. The relief is mentioned by March 1876, 129, Tanner 1881, 23, Knight 1893, 89, and Durand 1894, 593. A photo of the Buddha-rock is published by Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33. See also Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1429, referring to the "old Sanskrit name of the place *Yoginipitho*".

[32] This information is indebted to A. Cacopardo. See also Holzwarth 1998, 318–314 and 2006, 180.

[33] Ghulam Muhammad 1907, 106. "The stone figure of Yāthini", the giantess and sister of Śirí Badát, the man-eater is also mentioned by Haughton 1913, 165–166, 178–188. Versions of the local legend are reported by Leitner 1893, 9–16, Lorimer 1939, 272 and Trevelyan 1987, 83: The female demon used to prey on men; "one day she pounced on a holy man, who turned her into stone – hence the Buddha". See also Grierson 1905.

[34] Stellrecht [Müller-Stellrecht] 1980, 112–118. Dani 2001, 169. Mock 1998 interpreted the legend of the Cannibal King, who with help of his daughter was overthrown by Azur Jamśer, a descendant of the Shigar dynasty, as "a local version of a widely known South Asian tale", derived from the jātaka Brahmadatta. The legend could be explained "as an allegory of the change from Buddhism/Hinduism to Islam". See also Schomberg 1935, 249–250. Willson 1999, 262–267 published an original Burushaski text with an English translation of the story of the evil king of Gilgit Śirí Badát and his daughter Nuri Bano, told by Khisrau Khan in 1988.

[35] Jettmar 1981a, 310.

The rupestrian art galleries along the Upper Indus by contrast were neglected by Western archaeological research for nearly another century. The graduate of the École Militaire de Saint Cyr, the Sikh general Claude Court mentions in his historical topography of Swat and the surrounding areas, "the region of Tchêlas, situated on the eastern bank of the Indus", which by his informants of the 1830ties "is said to be highly remarkable for the number of ruined towns".[36] The ruins could represent the *koṭ*, fortified towns, which are found in the Indus Valley, such as Patelo Kot (Kino Kot) above Hodar [Hodur], at Thor or in the Darel and Tangir valleys. One of the British colonial officers, who contributed to the knowledge of the Northern Areas, Lieutenant Colonel John Biddulph (1840–1921), who was appointed as Officer on Special Duty in the British Gilgit Agency between 1877 to 1881 to the Wazir-i-Wazarat in Gilgit, contributed for the first time deeper comprehensive insight in the geography and ethnography of the region. In his famous *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* of 1880 he mentions – in addition to "remains of Buddhist Chortens" – (i.e. stupa, caitya) in the Sai and Gilgit valleys, "a number of ancient rock inscriptions" along the river "between Gor and Seo".[37] He pointed out a 'circular stone sepulchral mound' at Chashi, 'situated on the tongue of land formed by the junction of the rivers near Gupis', which nowadays is called Seleharan [Table 10.2]. The circle represents the most outstanding and at that time well-preserved example of a large group of megalithic stone circles in Yasin and Ishkoman, which after local tradition were "the work of giants in old days" and were not found elsewhere in Dardistan.[38] In his book he gives original observations of the geography, anthropology and local traditions – "habits and customs" – of the high mountain region on the basis of the material that he had collected during his travels in many of the main valleys in the so-called Eastern Hindukush. Including the research on the geology and geography by Frederick Drew, who served as a geologist in the service of the

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[36] Court 1839, 313.

[37] Biddulph 1880, 15 noted these inscriptions "at intervals (on) the whole way from Gor to Seo". – Colonel John Biddulph, born on 25 July 1840, educated at Westminster School and by a private tutor in Bonn 1855–1871, joined the 5th Bengal Cavalry in 1858, served through the Oudh Campaign of 1858, and received the Mutiny Medal. He served 1872–1877 as Aide-de-Camp to the Viceroy of India, Lord Northbrook, and was on special duty as Member of the Mission to Yārkand, the Pamir and Wakhān in 1873–1874 and again deputed as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit from 1877 to 1881 "for protecting trade and watching political events". In 1882 he was acting Agent to the Governor General and between that year and 1895, when he retired from the Political Department. He was Political Agent or Resident in areas including Quetta, Barōda and Gwāliyār and on deputation in 1885–1886 as a Boundary Settlement Officer. Biddulph died at Grey Court, Ham Common, on 31 December, 1921, in his 82nd year (India Office Records: History of Services, Home, Departments, 1895; India Office, 1921). Biddulph's career as British colonial officer and his contribution to the geographical and anthropological knowledge of Dardistan is acknowledged by K. Gratzl in the preface to the 1971 edition of Biddulph 1880. Captain Biddulph's political role in Chitral and Gilgit is described by Dani 2001, 258, 267–269, 280–281, and 312–313 with a list of the 26 British officers posted between 1877 to 1947 at the Gilgit Agency.

[38] Biddulph 1880, 57–58. Mentioned by Longstaff 1920–1921, 159.

Mahārāja of Kashmir between 1862 and 1872 to search for mineral resources, and by Robert Shaw, British Commissioner in Ladakh, Biddulph's studies contributed conclusively to the state of knowledge about Dardistan in the last quarter of the 19th century. After his travels in Kashgar in 1873 together with Sir D. Forsyth, Biddulph visited one year later Sirikol and Wakhan, and in the years from 1876 to 1878 he travelled to Gilgit, Hunza, Yasin and Chitral. His studies were also devoted to the collection of linguistic materials. Together with the studies by Leitner in the same regions of the Hindukush, the materials collected by Biddulph can be regarded as the beginning of the systematic recording of the vocabulary and grammar of the Dardic and Kafir languages, especially of Boorishki, i.e. Burushaski, spoken in Hunza, Nager, and Yasin. It was earlier called Khajuna by Leitner, the most singular language of all, which "stands by itself and cannot be classed with any other Dard language".[39] The other main Dardic languages, spoken in the area, are Shina, the Gilgit dialect, and Khowar, called 'Arnyiah' by Leitner, which is spread from Chitral to Yasin.

Brigadier-General George K. Cockerill, who was commissioned in 1892–1893 to reconnoiter the different main routes with its byways around Hunza and Nagar, reported during his march from the Shimshal Valley from Dut to the Karun Pass about "an inscription written in Persian on the cliff, a couplet from Saadi, cursing the difficulties of the road".[40] Lt. Col. Algernon G. A. Durand, who was appointed as first Political Agent in the newly established Gilgit Agency for a second time (1889–1893), complained about "the paucity of remains of archaeological interest"[41] and noticed only "figures of animals, generally markhor and ibex", also without realizing their scientific importance. He mentioned that "Buddhism has left his mark" around Gilgit, the Buddha relief at Naupura, a stone "pedestal of a statue with the socket holes for the feet", but no "sculptured inscriptions throughout the whole region. We have searched far and wide, but not one solitary inscription has been found except for one in Chitral, which was copied by Colonel W. Lockhart's party".[42]

The linguist and traveller Karl Eugen Ujfalvy von Mezo Kovest (1842–1904), was the descendant of an old Hungarian aristocratic family. During one of his three scientific journeys to Central Asia between 1876–1882 on behalf of the Oriental Academy in the College of Versailles, he also traversed in 1881 the Western Himalayas. During all of his notable travels he was accompanied by his wife Marie née Bourbon. They published rock carvings and inscriptions from Kharmang near the traditional lower road along the Indus in East Baltistan and mentioned similar representations from Gilgit and even Chitral.[43] Rock carvings such as images of stupas (chorten) and inscriptions were observed during their work in Baltistan by members of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, who ran a station at Shigar. A Tibetan inscription "mentioning a royal archer" was found near Roṅ-ṃdo (Rondu) by Reverend F. Gustafson of this mission.[44] Even earlier in 1852 Thomas Thomson reported from Skardu of "ruins, showing large blocks of well-hewn stone, fragments of marble fountains, and some solid walls supporting terraces which appear at one time to have been gardens, alone remain to show the former magnificence of the place".[45] The structures have been explained as remains of a "Mughal Garden", which was connected with the irrigation system maintained by the ancient Satpara hydraulic works. Their installations could have been realized by Raja Ali Sher Khan's queen, Mindoq-Gyalmo, a Ladakhi princess and daughter of Gyalpo Jamiang Namgyal, whom he had married after the conquest of Ladakh and an agreement between both rulers. Hashmatullah Khan assigned to this queen the construction of a separate palace called 'Mindoq-qar', outside the fort Khar-po-chea, and of a later famed garden called 'Halo-Bagh', which was irrigated by means of this channel.[46]

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[39] Biddulph 1880, 155–156 with appendix.

[40] Cockerill 1922, 103.

[41] Durand 1899, 57–58. Durand's political activities in the Northern Areas are described by Dani 2001, 259–269, 274–290.

[42] Durand 1894, 693. The Sanskrit inscriptions of Charrun and Pakhturinidini in Mastuj of Upper Chitral were noticed during Stein's exploration travel in 1906 (Stein 1912, I 44). The stone pedestal is still preserved in the former residence of the British Political Agent in Gilgit, now the Biddulph House with its public library. [+ HH here added this reference: Stein 1912, 44].

The first scientific study of rock carvings and inscriptions in this mountain range goes back to the German tibetologist August Hermann Francke (1870–1930), since 1896 a member of the Moravian mission of the Herrenhut brothers in Leh and Khalatse. But it was his predecessor at the mission, the doctor Karl Marx who referred for the first time in 1890 to rock carvings in Ladakh.[47] Ever since 1902 Francke published his archaeological and epigraphical studies about Ladakh and Baltistan, also pointing out the Buddhist representations in Chilas.[48] His readings of the three Tibetan inscriptions in the Buddhist relief at Manthal near Skardu were published in 1906 by Lady Duncan,[49] without referring to the earlier copies by Vigne. During her above mentioned legendary "summer ride" of 1904, which started from Leh to Khalatse and from there down to the Upper Indus River and entering the Hanu Nalah, she noted "many carvings of hunting scenes".[50] She passed the wild gorge of Hanu Nalah, a tributary of the Indus, and across the Chorbat La (5090 m) she came along the Shyok River to Khapalu with "its wonderful range of needle peaks touched with snow", for her a reminiscence of Arcadia. There, the son of the Raja Nazir Ali Khan showed her the carved Buddha rock at Sadpor near Skardu, which then was unknown both to her and to Francke, who had asked her to look out for Buddhist remains in Baltistan. In her brilliant descriptions of the different landscapes, their inhabitants with their local customs Lady Duncan also referred to the decorated vernacular architecture of the mosques, which resemble those in Kashmir. On her ride from Khaplu to Skardu she observed also rocks with roughly carved ibexes, hunting scenes, hand prints, a chorten, as well as modern Tibetan inscriptions in the Shyok Valley between the villages of Kuness, Kuru and Kiris.[51]

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[43] Ujfalvy 1884, 247, 248, 269 fig. XVIII–XIX and Ujfalvy-Bourdon 1887, 333–334 with fig. See also Schuh 2011, 106 fig. 101–102. Adair 1899, 22, on his way from Kashmir to Baltistan noted on rocks in the Dras Valley of West Ladakh "rude figures of ibex with colossal horns, quaint-looking figures, and rough inscriptions".

[44] Neve 1900, 41. The inscription of Rondu is found on a large boulder at the northern side of the road near Basho, ca. 10 km downstream of the Ayoub Bridge near Kachura, mentioned in Francke's Collection of Tibetan Inscriptions under no. 9 (Francke 1926, 144).

[45] Thomson 1852, 218. See also Emerson 1984, 105 footnote 18, and Dani 2001, 28, 217.

[46] Hashmatullah Khan 1979 [1939], 14, 18.

[47] Marx 1897.

[48] The Herrenhut mission, founded in 1722/1727 by the Saxonian Count Zinzendorf, established in 1884 a branch in Leh. Francke worked as a missionary from 1896–1899 in Leh, from 1899–1906 in Khalatse, and from 1906 in Kyelang. As an official archaeological representative of the British-Indian government in 1909/1910 he undertook an exploration journey to the western border of Tibet, which resulted in the edition of his 'Antiquities of Indian Tibet' I, 1914 and II, 1926 Calcutta). After his return to Europe, he was sent again to India on 18 May 1914. After his journey through Russia and Chinese Turkestan, he crossed the Karakorum Pass, where he met members of the Italian De Filippi expedition at Suget-Karaul; there he was informed about the outbreak of war. From Leh he was able to make research trips as far as Kargil and after his arrival in Srinagar he was send to Rawalpindi, where he stayed in war captivity until he returned in 1916 to his hometown

Maulana Ghulam Muhammad, who served as chief clerk during Colonel John Biddulph's service as officer on special duty in the Political Office of the British Gilgit Agency (1877–1881), became the first witness to refer to rock carvings in a wider area. In his book of 1905, *Festivals and Folklore of Gilgit*, he described the assemblage of Buddhist and other engravings near the "Botugah Nullah" at Chilas "where there stand some boatmen's huts", now known as Chilas I (Jayachand) in the east of the Buto Gah.[52] Other groups of petroglyphs below this place and on the river bank downstream, perhaps Chilas II, show goats, markhors, deer and

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Gnadenberg in Silesia (Francke 1921). For his biography see: Walravens – Taube 1992. His most important publications about rock carvings in Ladakh: Francke 1902a, 1903, 1906a, 1907. Rock carvings at Dongga: Francke 1914 vol. I, 104–105 pl. 44. Rock carvings from a castle near Khalatse attributed to the Dards: Francke 1906b. Buddhist carvings with a Kharoṣṭhī inscription possibly mentioning Vima Kadphises (287 AD) from Khalatse are mentioned by Francke 1907a, 592–597 pl. II. 1907b, 1907c, 148 pl. II,2. Enriquez 1915, 175; Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, pl. 16, 2 and 19. Paul 1986, 27–28 pl. 1. Domkhar: Francke 1925, 369 pl. II,1. Karakorum cave, north of Leh: de Terra 1931, 47–48 pl. 7.

[49] Duncan 1906, 300–302 mentions a local Buddhist Balti ruler 'Lag-čhen Mahābāhu', "dating from not later than 1000 A.D.". Francke 1926, vol. II, 281.

[50] Duncan 1906, 176–225 with drawings of carved wood panels of the mosques, p. 219, 221 and 248.

[51] Duncan 1906, 272–274 with figures. See also Desio 1985. For rock carvings from Kuness near Kiris along the Shyok River: Afridi 1988, 23–25.

[52] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110–111 published from Chilas Bridge (Jayachand) a sketch of a still visible stupa image on stone 39: MANP 6, 58 no. 39:1. See also Snoy 1975, 223–224 figs 108–110. Gazetteer 1909, 107 – perhaps referring to Ghulam Muhammad – mentions also remains of ancient stone buildings and Buddhist carvings, which suggest that Gilgit was once the seat of a Buddhist or Hindu dynasty [+ Here HH is quoted verbatim: note that the citation cannot be found throughout Gazetter 1909 (N. B.: Chilas Bridge = Chilas Brücke, Chilas-Jayachand)].

also representations of axes, or “temples with men”, goats, horses, cows and also inscriptions. He also had knowledge of similar engravings from the Bagrot Valley between the villages of Sanikar and Bulchi. Further, he referred to two pictures of Buddha in the Sai Valley at Barmas near Damot, the one carved on a stone, and the other – a painting of Buddha sitting among his disciples. This scene recalls the famous legend of Buddha’s First Sermon in the animal park at Benares, which is one of the most elaborate masterpieces of Thalpan’s rock art. It seems that Ghulam Muhammad’s account of this painting can neither be authentic nor does it go back to first-hand knowledge. All these carvings and inscriptions in the tradition of the Chilasis and the Bagrot people are said to have been made by the fairies, who frequently visited their lands. In the local tradition the rock art, as in other Central Asian regions, is integrated into the magic-symbolic sphere, as described by Ghulam Muhammad: “The tradition is that in ancient times the land was frequently visited by fairies who used to make these inscriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man’s power to produce such inscriptions. It is also affirmed that these fairies were seen in those days by all men, but nowadays they are visible to no one except the Mullah by dint of his miracles. The Bagrot people say that the carvings were inscribed by the fairies on the night of ‘Shino Bazono’; and on the same night the fairies frequently used to rub away the figures from one stone and to engrave the same on another”.[53] As the figures of ibex and markhor scratched on the rocks are attributed to the fairies, also other ancient monuments are attached with distinct legends.[54]

In the following of the expedition by the Duke of Abruzzi to the Baltoro glacier and the Karakorum in 1909, the Italian geographer Filippo De Filippi inaugurated a new chapter in the exploration of the Northern Areas, particularly of Baltistan. The Italian expedition to the Himalaya, Karakorum and Eastern Turkestan in 1913 and 1914 after Vigne’s three visits between 1835 and 1838 gave a more detailed geographical and geological description of the Skardu basin.[55] They recorded the Skardu fortress with its mosque, ancient wooden mosques at Shigar and Khaplu, and the ancient dike of Lake Satpara, which was described by Lady Duncan as a Buddhist dam construction. They noted also the megalithic defence walls, which block the route coming from the Deosai Plateau, running down to the centre of the Satpara Lake. The defence walls belong to a fortress on the mountain ridge. Of importance was the visit to the already known Buddhist relief of Manthal and the discovery of another, meanwhile lost Buddha carving (on a 2 m high and 3 m broad boulder) near the village of Olting, which flank the route from Skardu to Deosai Plateau at the mouth of Lake Satpara were recorded.[56]

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[53] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110–111. About the magic power of carvings in Wakhan, see Gratzl 1978, 313–314.

[54] Haughton 1913, 206.

[55] De Filippi 1932, 37–99. For photos of De Filippi’s expedition to Central Asia in 1909 and 1913–1914, see: Mancini 2002 [+ pp. 204–251] and Cassi – Santini – Zan 2012. Anastasio 2008 and 2009.

[56] De Filippi [Filippi De] 1924, 65 with photo. Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, 74–75 pl. 14 and 15, 1. Dainelli 1925.

3 The Gilgit Manuscripts

The discovery of the famous “Gilgit Manuscripts”, found by local cowherds in 1931 “under the vault of a stupa” at the Buddhist site situated above the Kar Gah, near the village Naupura ca. 15 km in the west of Gilgit, is a mark-stone for the understanding of the Buddhist spirituality and history of the Northern Areas. Sir M. Aurel Stein, who shortly afterwards in June 1931 came to Gilgit, as the first European announced the discovery of the manuscript in *The Statesman* of 24th July 1931: “Boys watching flocks above Naupur village, about two miles west of Gilgit Cantonment, are said to have cleared a piece of timber sticking out on the top of a small stone-covered mound. Further digging laid bare a circular chamber within the ruins of a Buddhist stūpa filled with hundreds of small votive *stupas* and relief plaques, common in Central Asia and Tibet”. The ancient manuscripts were found “closely packed in a wooden box” together with charms like *dharanis*, votive stupas, clay tablets and other objects. Joseph Hackin, who visited Gilgit on 22nd July 1931, also described the place where the manuscripts were found.[57] The stupa-shaped structure was a quadrangular building with two superimposed storeys. The east side of the ground floor had a length of 6.60 metres, the upper one of 6.00 metres. The interior was described as a round chamber with the “re-ains” (remains) of a central pillar in the centre which supported the wooden ceiling. In 1938 villagers again dug inside the upper chamber where they found another wooden ceiling. After they had removed the beams of the floor they had access to a second chamber, where they found bundles of manuscripts. The contradictory history of the four manuscripts’ discovery handed down by several reports has been discussed by Jettmar.[58]

It took seven years until the archaeologist Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri from Srinagar was given permission by the State of Jammu and Kashmir to set out for Gilgit and to start an official excavation in Naupura. He had requested this after receiving the news about the manuscripts. The troublesome journey between Srinagar to Gilgit at a distance of 228 miles should take his party 14 days’ time, between August 5 and 18, 1938. By agreement with the Political Agent of Gilgit, Major I. W. Galbraith, Shastri’s team after the survey of the mountain ridge undertook a brief excavation of six days at Mound C, “a stone edifice of three storeys and roundish in form”, from August 20 to 26. In addition to this main excavation, the mounds A, B and D were also examined, which delivered a series of clay, metal and stone objects.[59] Towered over by a chain of hillocks was a line of altogether four ruined monuments A–D, rising on the edge of a plateau which steeply slopes down to the Shuko Gah. Jettmar noted above the village Naupura four ruined monuments situated in a line, some of them stupas of the Buddhist monastery.[60] The so-called stupa "appeared to be a stone edifice of three storeys and roundish in form, twenty-two feet in height with mud plaster inside and sloping externally up to the top. Its circumference measured internally fifty feet. To strengthen the wall of the edifice and to support the roof on the top, woodwork was used".[61] Apparently in the lower chamber with its floor covered by rubble, now called Mound C, another four manuscripts and fragments of a few more texts were discovered. These manuscripts written on birch bark and palm leaves were not illuminated, but three sets of wooden covers showing paintings on the inside belonged to them. The sensational findings by order of Maharaja Hari Singh were brought into the custody of the then newly established Shri Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar. Later they were transferred to the Central Asia Museum of the Institute for Central Asia Studies at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar and again assembled at the Museum.[62]

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[57] Stein 1931, 863–865. Hackin’s report is mentioned by Lèvi 1932, 24–25. A variant of the discovery story is reported by Trevelyan 1987, 83–85, who stayed as a boy with his family between 1929–1931 in Gilgit. His father Walter’s turn of duty there as a military adviser ended in 1933.

[58] Jettmar 1981 a, b and 1990c. See also the critical review in Hinüber 1979, 329–337.

[59] Shastri 1939, 8–9 pl. 1434, 1440. A systematic publication of the small finds is still required.

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[60] Shastri 1939. Dutt 1939–1959. Ganhar – Ganhar 1956, 206–210. The story of the discoveries by locals in 1931 and 1938, reported in different versions, and Kaul Shastri's excavation in 1938 are discussed by Jettmar 1979a, 1990c, 305–308, 2002, 157–173 and Hinüber 1979, who as the first European epigraphist studied the four manuscripts in Srinagar in 1976 and 1978. See also Mukherjee 1987. The manuscripts of 1931, found "in five small boxes, all placed in a big box", were apparently not all sent to Srinagar, according Mukherjee 1987, 24–26 footnote 2 and 14. The manuscripts which were found by locals in 1931 and 1938 "remained in in the house of the Wazir-i-Wazarat posted in Gilgit and were finally taken to Bunji, which after 1947 were handed over to the Government of Pakistan, Jettmar 1990c, 307. Tucci 1977, 59–60 bought in Rawalpindi another bulky part of the text *Saṅghabhedavastu* and *Śayanāsanavastu* and handed it over to the Archaeological Museum of Karachi. [+ Published by E. Conze (1974), and R. Gnoli (1977–1978, Id. 1978). On the discovery and acquisition process of the Karachi MS, see Olivieri 2023a]. A bundle of birch-bark manuscripts was found by "a local bee hunter" in Naupura around 1996, which is said to be kept in the Kurita collection (Matsuda 2000, 106–107). Other fragments of the Gilgit manuscripts, which had been found by local looters instigated by Pathan dealers since 1994 in the Buddhist site of Naupura, were sold to the Martin Schøyen collection in Oslo and repatriated in 1995 to Pakistan (see St. Lundén in his article "Skriftsamleren" in *Culture without Context* 16, Spring 2005. There a photo of the ongoing "Looting at Gilgit" is also portrayed). Numerous clay objects such as miniature stupas and inscribed tablets were found in the ruins: such objects, acquired in 1958 and published by Fussman 1978, 5–7 pl. 11, and now kept in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna [+ now *Weltmuseum Wien*] may originate from this site. For other inscribed tablets and stupa models from Naupura, see: Dani – Nazir Khan 1998.

[61] Shastri 1939, 2–3.

[62] The corpus of the Gilgit manuscripts consist of three sets, the first found by shepherds in 1931, the second with four manuscripts discovered during the excavations in 1938, which were transferred to Srinagar. Dar 2006, 223 mentions an earlier discovery of a Gilgit manuscript in 1906 containing a version of the *prajñāpāramitā* text, one of the famous sutras of the Mahāyāna School. The floods by the Jhelum River in September 2014 "have reportedly caused extensive damages to the 6th century birch-wood Gilgit manuscript housed in the Shri Pratap Singh Museum" (*Pamir Times* September 10, 2014). The smaller third set acquired by Giuseppe Tucci in 1956 from a dealer in Rawalpindi is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Karachi. [+ see Olivieri 2023a]. The loss of the museum's treasures [Shri Pratap Singh Museum] has been explained as a result of "institutional

Due to the somewhat contradictory story of the manuscripts' discovery, there existed rumours about bronze figurines having been found as well in the "hollow stūpa", which went into the collection of the Maharaja of Kashmir.[63] After his abdication from the throne in 1948 and his retirement in Bombay "a group of bronzes appeared on the art market", which took its course into American private collections.[64] Candidates for such so-called Kashmiri or Gilgit bronzes are the two famous Gautama Buddha figures, dedicated in the year 714 by the treasurer Saṃkarasena with his consort the princess Devaśrī and by Nandivikramādityanandī, the Palola Śāhi king ruling in Palola / Balūr. The latter was the ninth ruler in the list of the Palola Dynasty, according to Oskar von Hinüber.[65] The bronze in the Rockefeller collection shows between two stupas a crowned and bejewelled Buddha in the lotus seat; the other bronze in the Norton Simson collection presents the bejewelled and crowned Buddha in the yogic posture on a lion throne.[66]

Of the Gilgit manuscripts' Manuscript no. 1 consists of 54 palm leaves, 6 × 25 cm in size, with five lines of writing in black ink on each side. Manuscript no. 2 is of birch-bark; the leaves are about 7.5 × 30 cm in size with nine lines of writing on each leaf. According to Shastri they "were all found under two wooden covers each having the papier-mache work on the outer side of the covers. The leaves were held together by a record lace or string passing through a hole punched in the middle of each and wound round the whole set."[67] Two of these covers (MsC 1 and MsC 2) were published for the first time by P. Banerjee in 1968.

The manuscripts unveiled not only the high standard of Buddhist spirituality in this mountainous region, but also with the 10 colophons helped to establish for the first time a list of three rulers: Vajrādityanandī (presumably 585–605), Vikramādityanandī (presumably 605–625), and Surendravikramādityanandī (presumably 625–644/655). They belonged to a local dynasty, the Palola Ṣāhis, which governed the kingdom of Bolōr from the fifth to the beginning of the 8th century AD and represent in chronological order number three to five in the king's list, according to Oskar von Hinüber. They also occur as donors in some of these manuscripts. An early report of 1931 by Sylvain Lévi about one colophon, and the succeeding editorial work of mainly Nalinkasha Dutt since 1932 provided insight into the relevance of the

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failure", since ironically the manuscripts had been shifted in 1947 to the National Archives at New Delhi to protect them from tribal raiders, and after their return to Srinagar again during the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1956 and 1971 they were flown to Delhi to preserve them from air-raids.

[63] Jettmar 1990b, 805–807; 1990c, 307; 2002, 169–170, 185–186.

[64] Pal 1975, 108–109. See also Jettmar 1981a, 316–317, who suggests the 'Pritzker Buddha' as one possible candidate.

[65] Hinüber 2004, 96–97, 99.

[66] Rockefeller Buddha, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Pal 1975, 106–107 no. 30. Paul 1986, 219–243. Fussman 1993, 43–47 pl. 31. Hinüber 2004, 39–40 no. 15, fig. 6. – Norton Simson Buddha ('Pritzker Buddha'), Los Angeles, County Museum of Art: Pal 1975, 108–109 no. 31; 1977, 53 no. 26. Paul 1986, 202–219, pl. 86. Fussman 1993, 39–43, pl. 30. Hinüber 2004, 38–39 no. 14, fig. 5.

[67] Shastri 1939, 5.

manuscripts for the religion and history in this region. In the introduction to the first volume of the complete edition of the Gilgit Manuscripts, Dutt for the first time drew the attention to the existence to an until then unknown dynasty, the Palola Ṣāhi.[68] In his "Report on the Gilgit Excavations" Shastri enlarged the knowledge of this dynasty in his mention of another ruler noted in a tiny fragment of the magic text 'Mahāmāyūrī'.[69] The colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts, magic texts and the royal inscription of Hatun, which was copied by Captain A. W. Redpath in 1941, rendering the name of yet another king, for the first time shed some light on the historical unawareness of the Northern Areas. Von Hinüber presented a new edition of the epigraphical materials, which also included the hitherto unedited colophons I, III and X, thus improving earlier readings.[70]

Together with the manuscripts a longer series of archaeological objects such as bronze rings, stone beads, amulets, a golden coin, and clay miniature stupas, *t'sa t'sas*, sealings, "95 sun dried bricks", wooden pots and other artefacts were registered in the museum, which according to Shastri's report originated from his excavation.[71] Deborah Klimburg-Salter was able to view some of the objects in Srinagar in 1967. She published a few examples: the sun-dried bricks, perhaps *t'sa t'sas*, showing an "overall pattern of stupas, *mchod rtens* – a seated Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas on either side", stupa-shaped *t'sa t'sas* of the "Descent of Heaven" type, and clay sealings containing the *gāthā* of the Chain of Causation in various states of disrepair and incompleteness.

Summarizing the archaeological data of the six-day excavation of 1938, Gérard Fussman interpreted the structure as a stone tower with a wooden framework, which "might have been both the chapel and lodgings of an *ācārya*, performing protective rituals".[72] As a result of ongoing illicit diggings the site of the monastery now looks like a battlefield – yet another example of the destruction and irreversible loss of the former rich ancient heritage of the Northern Areas.

The painted book covers depicting Bodhisattvas are not only among the most elaborate portable Buddhist paintings of South Asia, but are also the oldest of the Kashmiri-style to have survived there and therefore are of particular importance for the Buddhist art history. The only available comparative paintings are known from Central Asia and Afghanistan. Since the publication of the three manuscript covers by P. Banerjee and Pratapaditya Pal their stylistic analysis and final dating is owed to Klimburg-Salter.[73] Two of the book covers (MsC 1 and 2) on the basis of comparison with murals or portable paintings, sculptures as well as rock images from Chilas-Thalpan have been dated to the 7th – 8th centuries. The third pair of the elaborately carved and painted cover (MsC 3) on the contrary can be traced to the Tibetan artistic tradition and has been attributed to the 8th – 9th century. The manuscripts may have been produced in a monastery near an assumed residence at Gilgit or in Baltistan,[74] but it is more likely that they could have been written by a traditional manufacture in Kashmir by order of the Palola Ṣāhi court.

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[68] Lévi 1932, Dutt 1932, 1933, 1936, 1939–1959. 9. [+ On the colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts, see Hinüber 1980].

[69] + Shastri 1939.

[70] Hinüber 1979, 1980, 1985, 59–61.

[71] Shastri 1939, 8–9 pl. 1434, 1440. Klimburg-Salter 1992, 397–398 fig. 47, 3–6. Taddei 1970. See also the stupa-shaped *t'sa t'sas* and clay sealings from Gilgit, now in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna [+ now *Weltmuseum Wien*]: Fussman 1978, 5–7 pl. 2. They have been compared with similar *t'sa t'sas* from Afghanistan to Tibet: Taddei 1970.

[72] Fussman 2004.

On 27 August Shastri also made a trial excavation in the stupa of Henzal [Map] in the Gilgit Valley, but his short undertaking seems to have delivered no visible results. The ruins had been noticed by earlier travellers and considered as a much later frontier tower, like those also found in other valleys.[75]

A decade later, in 1941, Captain Redpath, Assistant Political Agent in Gilgit, directed the Anglo-Hungarian explorer Sir Marc Aurel Stein – his eminent role in the historical investigation of the Northern Areas will be described below – to the Sanskrit inscription of Hatun, 5 km north of the mouth of the Ishkoman River into the Gilgit River. The discovery there of a royal inscription proved to be another important source about the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty, as it designates the name of a king, his majesty, *paṭoladeva ṣāhi śrī Nava-Surendrādityanandī,* descendant of the Bhagadatta family.[76] He is the fifth sovereign of this ṣā, and his name is repeatedly testified by manuscripts and inscriptions on Kashmir bronzes. In addition, the text also conveys a vague idea of the political situation in this part of Little Palūr, the region around Gilgit including Punial. The inscription of seven lines in Proto-Śāradā script, engraved in the eastern face of an almost cubic boulder, reports the construction of a ca. 16 km long irrigation channel by the most prominent civil servant *Makaraṣimgha* on December 19, 671 AD, and also the foundation of a place named after him – *Makarapura*, or New-Makara-Town. Makaraṣimgha, probably a Burusho, belonged to the *Kāñcudīya* clan, which in accordance with the name Kanjut, the name later known to be Hunza,[77] could indicate his origin from this region. The text mentions also the place name of Gilgit – *Giligittă* – by naming its "chef de l'armée à Gilgit" *(Giligittă-Sarăṃgha). Hătūna* in *Haṇesāra-viṣayā* (district) clearly refers to the present-day village of Hatun itself, situated in Punial. Therefore, the identification of Haṇesāra with the Ishkoman Valley, whose ancient name was Hansora, would be comprehensible, and the affiliation of the region with the territory of the dynasty is evident.

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[73] One of the covers which are painted inside is depicted by Shastri 1939, 7 pl. 1436. MsC 1 and 2: Banerjee 1968 and 1992, 141–147 pl. 62–66. Together with MsC1/2 also MsC 3 was published by Pal – Meech-Pekarik 1988, 41–44 pls 1–3. For an analysis of the three painted covers, see: Klimburg-Salter (ed.) 1982, 88 fig. 30–33; 1990, 1991a/b, 1992, 1993.

[74] Jettmar 1985b, 141.

[75] Hanzal Mound': Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1426. A photo of the stupa is published by Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33: "The construction of the masonry does not, however, altogether bear out the theory of Buddhist construction, and Colonel R. A. Wahab considers that it is a frontier tower of ordinary fashion which has in the process of dissolution assumed the appearance of a dilapidated stupa". The stupa is mentioned earlier by March 1876, 130 (Hunzil) [+ no ref.] and Stein 1907, 19.

[76] Measurements of the boulder: 4.06 m wide, 3.65 m high, 4.00 m deep [+ a side note by HH reads: "to be checked"]. Its historical importance was first realized by Lévi 1932 and Stein 1944, 5–13 with a map of the site. The first reading of the inscription is indebted to Chakravarti 1953–1954, followed by a comprehensive study by Fussman 1993, 4–19 and final comparative interpretation of the text by O. von Hinüber (2004, 48–52 no. 22). For photos of the Hatun Rock, see: Hallier 1991, fig. 5 and Tsuchiya 1999, 358–359 fig. 6–7. See also the earlier varying discussions by Dani 2001, 34–35, 46, 151 and Jettmar 2002, 122, 125–126, 158–159. The rock was blasted by the owner of the field in 2011.

Another important source about this dynasty, also known from Chinese sources of the T'ang Dynasty and Indian tradition, was revealed by the first occurrence of the so-called "Kashmir (Gilgit) bronzes", which bear dedicatory inscriptions, some offering chronological data.[78] They were created to serve a religious purpose, as they depict divinities and myths of Buddhism, Vaishnavism (?) and Shivaism (?). Some of the most outstanding / elaborate and complex metal sculptures (of exquisite technical finesse), such as the crowned Buddha Śākyamuni of the Rockefeller (no. 15) and Pritzker (no. 16) bronzes dating to ca. 715 AD (also with royal attendants) were commissioned by members of the royal family of (Gilgit).[79] During the 8th century, thanks to the patronage of the royal court in Gilgit, workshops of specialised sculptors arose. They reveal remarkable virtuosity. Although not as elaborate, an elegant image of the goddess Prajnaparamita (or Sarasvati) is stylistically associated with the two inscribed Kashmir bronzes. She is the earliest representation of this important Mahayana goddess in the Kashmiri tradition.

4 Marc Aurel Stein and the Scientific Exploration of the High Mountain Region

A new chapter in the history of exploration of the Northern Areas began with Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), geographer, historical topographer and linguist, who saw himself as archaeological explorer.[80]

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[77] Biddulph 1880, 26–27.

[78] Vogel 1906. Barrett 1962. Pal 1975. Schroeder 1981. Schroeder 2001. Hinüber 2004.

[79] Rockefeller Bronze, height 35 cm: Tathāgata Vairocana, 750–850 AD. The pedestal inscription reads "This is the pious gift of the devout *Śaṅkarasena*, the great Lord of the elephant brigade, and of the poor minded and pious princess *Devaśriyā*, made the second day of Vaiśākha in the year 3 or 8". Schröder 1981, 22 with plate, 108–109, 118 fig. 16 B [+ a side notes left by HH reads: "Patrons included ministers, merchants, and monks"].

[80] A well-documented record of his life and work is indebted to Jeannette Mirsky, occasionally disclosing accurate knowledge of the local geography (Mirsky 1977). See also the short obituary notes by Oldham 1944. [+ On Stein, see Olivieri 2015b, Olivieri 2015c].

Born of Jewish parents in Budapest and educated at the Kreuzschule in Dresden, following his studies in Vienna and Leipzig, he received his doctorate in Old Persian and Sanskrit at the University of Tübingen in 1883. Stein's devotion to Indian and Iranian studies brought him in 1884 to Oxford and London, where Sir Henry Rawlinson helped him to get an employment in India in 1888. As Principal of the Oriental College at Lahore he went to Kashmir to search for Sanskrit manuscripts. In 1889 he began the translation of the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, a *Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, which was written by the 12th-century scholarly poet Kalhaṇa (1892, 1900). The oldest record of Kashmir history was edited by Stein in 1892 and published with a commentary at last in 1900. As a member of the Archaeological Survey of India and with the support of Lord Curzon's government, Stein started the series of his daring and adventuresome expeditions to Central Asia that led to his fame as one of the great archaeological explorers. He is designated as "the most prodigious combination of scholar, explorer, archaeologist and geographer of his generation".[81] Early in his youth a triad gave him "the grand design for his life": The Macedonian world-conqueror Alexander was his hero, whose routes to the Indus he traced, followed by the Venetian trader Marco Polo of the fourteenth century, and the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang of the seventh century, whom he called his "patron saint". But also the traditional imagination that Hungarians are the descendants of the Huns may have been another explanation for his attraction to Central Asia. His three arduous expeditions into Chinese Central Asia in 1900–1901, 1906–1908 and 1913–1916, published in three voluminous books, *Ancient Khotan* (1907), *Serindia* (1921) and *Innermost Asia* (1928), proved him as a most distinguished archaeologist. During his first expedition in 1900–1901 to Chinese Turkestan, he set out from Bandipur in Kashmir, the starting point of the "Gilgit Transport Road". Traversing the passes Tragbal and Burzil led him into the Astor Valley, and after crossing the Indus River at Bunji [?] he reached Gilgit in 12 days. From there he marched through the Hunza Valley, "often over narrow rock ledges and by rough ladder-like galleries *(rafik)* along the faces of cliffs", up to the Kilik Pass, from where he arrived at Tashkurgan, the centre of the Sarikol District. During his journey to Hunza on the Nager side near the hamlet of Thol with its old fort [Map], he identified the then well preserved ruins of a stupa, which reminded him of "chortens of Sikkim and Ladakh".[82] The stupa had a height of twenty feet and was built of unhewn stone slabs. The base was quadrangular, each side being 80 feet long. The next set-back storey was also quadrangular, the third storey was a smaller octagon, followed by a circular drum, and crowned by an apparently hemispherical dome.

The stupa was also observed by Count Ōtani Kōzui (1876–1948) during the Hongwanji Expedition of 1902–1903 on his way from Kashgar across the Mintaka Pass into the Hunza Valley.[83] Count Ōtani was the abbot of the influential Nishi Honganji Branch of the Buddhist sect *Jōdo shinshū*, the "Sect of the Pure Land", in Kyoto. He organized three archaeological expeditions of learned monks from Nishi Honganji Temple in 1902, 1908/1909 and 1910 to search for the sect's pretended past in Chinese Turkestan and Gansu. Since the Great Game was continuing with a new opponent, besides the British, Chinese and Tsarist Russians, Ōtani's motives were suspected to be more than purely historical. In the Chinese view the somewhat mysterious Japanese Count belonged to the group of foreigners starting with the Russians J. A. Regel (1879) and Dimitrii A. Klements (1898), the Swedish geographer and cartographer Sven Hedin with his first expedition to Central Asia in 1893–1900, and during the first two decades of the 20th century followed by Stein, the Germans Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq with their four expeditions (between 1902–1914), the French sinologist Albert Pelliot and the American Langdon Warner, a group of foreigners who plundered the Buddhist past of Xinjiang in a series of robberies.[84] It is therefore absolutely comprehensible when the Chinese viewed "the so-called scholars" after their archaeological activities, especially of Stein, "as shameless adventurers who robbed them of their history".[85]

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[81] Lattimore – Lattimore 1973, 176.

[82] The march started at Bandipur on May 31and ended in Gilgit on June 11, 1901: Stein 1904, 750; 1907, 20. The stupa is also mentioned by Haughton 1913, 212–213, by Schomberg 1935, 101, and by Lorimer 1939, 65.

[83] Otani 1906, 868. The photo of the stupa shows another view of the monument in the Hunza Valley.

Stein had heard also from British officers about other "ruined mounds" near Gilgit, at "Hanzil (Henzal) and Jutial", which in the succeeding years were identified also as stupas. His second Central Asian expedition took place in 1906–1908, which was described as a competition to Lou-Lan in rivalry with French and German museum missions in order to exploit the painted 'Caves of the Thousand Buddhas' in Chinese Turkestan. On his travels starting from Peshawar, Stein crossed through Swat and Chitral.[86] There, on his way along the road on the left bank of the Mastuj River and its upper branch Yarkhun between Chitral and Mastuj, he documented engravings of two stupas and inscriptions on two large granite boulders. The first carving is situated at Pakhtorinidini opposite the hamlet Jomshili on the right bank of the river, and the other near Charrun upwards from Reshun, which had been found earlier in 1899. The drawings showed "in accurate detail the identical architectural proportions which I had again and again observed in the ruined Stupas of Kashgar and Khotan". The accompanying Brāhmī inscriptions near both images "gave the name of Rāja Jaīvavarman as that of the donor, and may be approximately ascribed to the fifth century A.D.". Instead of following the traditional route along the Yarkhun to Wakhan across the Baroghil Saddle, Stein decided first to ascend the glacier-crowned range which flanks the Darkot Pass to the west. This pass is famous for the memorable crossing by the daring Korean general Kao Hsien-chih and his Chinese troops in 747 AD on their successful campaign against the Tibetan dominated Little Palur, undertaken from the Oxus through Yasin as far as Gilgit.[87]

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[84] During the second Japanese expedition of 1908/1909 the monk-archaeologists Tachibana Zuicho (1890–1968) and Eizaburo Nomuro, both also officers of the Imperial army, were suspected by the British and the Russians of being secret intelligence agents 'along the Silk Road': Hopkirk 1980, 190–197, 202–206, 232–234. The only eighteen-year old team leader Tachibana discovered on his trip the famous 4th century Li Bo manuscript near Loulan. He organized also the third Otani expedition of 1910, which began excavations near Turfan. The course of events during this expedition is summarized by Galambos 2008. [+ On Sven Hedin's expeditions, see Hedin 1922a, 1922b].

[85] Hopkirk 1980, 2.

[86] Stein 1912, 42, 44–45; 1921, 37 and following pages, fig. 5–6. For a new photo, see: Hallier 1991, 4 fig. 3.

For his third expedition to Chinese Turkestan (1913–1916) with its beginning at the end of July 1913 Stein chose a direct route from Srinagar in Kashmir "through the deep-cut gorges of Kishanganga and its tributaries to the snowy passes of Barai and Fasat and then down to Chilas".[88] From there he was carried downstream on a raft made of six bullock skins steered by a crew of four *soniwal*s, the goldwashers, along the Indus to reach the first destiny, the village of Hodar at the mouth of the Hodar Nala. Near the village of Hodar he identified on a detached rocky ridge the ruins of the ancient hillfort 'Kino Kot', the Black Fort, and on its southern slope he also noted on a rock "incised marks" representing the "ancient Indian emblem Pādukās", "pairs of sacred footprints" and 'chakras', the Buddhist Wheel of Law.[89] After ascending the narrow Hodar Valley and traversing the Unutai Pass into the Khanbari Valley, he was the first European to set foot on the unexplored tribal territory of the independent Dard republic of Darel and Tangir. Its ruler, Raja Pakhtun Wali, had granted him permission to visit the normally closed region on the condition that no official of the Gilgit Agency would accompany him. In the vicinity of the walled township of Manikyal in the fertile Darel Valley he surveyed ruins of pre-Buddhist, heavily fortified hill settlements, known as *kot*s (forts), built on rocky ridges. Near *Bojo-kot* his "rapid" digging "brought to light unmistakable relics of a Buddhist burial-ground in the form of cinerary urns, metal ornaments".[90] He was also the first to describe the designs of the fine wood-carvings in houses, mosques and graveyards. The decorative motifs he traced from Graeco-Buddhist art, as known in Gandhara.[91] At Poguch (Phugush) in the lower Darel Valley he even claimed to have identified "the most likely site" of the Buddhist sanctuary To-li or Ta-li-lo, whose miraculous colossal wooden image representing Maitreya was praised by the Chinese pilgrims Faxian (Fa-hsien) and Xuanzang (Hsüantang).[92] It was Jettmar, who during his first visits to Darel was not convinced of this localization.[93] For Stein the tomb of Shahakhel Baba (Shah Khel), an Islamic saint, which attracted pilgrims from distant parts of the Gilgit chains of the Hindukush as well as from Swat and Upper Indus, attested the continuity of local worship since Buddhist times. After passing the Gayal Gah, a tributary of the Darel River, he crossed the rugged spur that divides the Darel and Tangir valleys by the Shardai Pass into Tangir. From there Stein's team moved northward across the watershed range between Indus and Gilgit rivers by the Hershat Pass to make their way down the Batres Gah to the steep Gilgit Valley as far as near Gupis (a track which could have been used also by Chinese pilgrims). He travelled farther by crossing the bridge across the Gilgit River to the north into the Yasin Valley, where he noticed at the outlet of the Nasbar Gol the ruins of a stupa.[94] Among the debris he collected "eight clay seals", *ts'a ts'as*, showing the impression in low relief of a stupa "with four tier-base on row of roundels" and around it the "Buddhist formula *ye dharmaprabhavāḥ*, in Nāgari characters of the late type common in Tibet". Like in other Buddhist shrines these clay seals formed part of a destroyed votive deposit up to the Darkot Pass, which he remembered from his second expedition to Central Asia. The *ts'a ts'as*, on which commonly sacred formulae are inscribed and one or more stupas or various divinities are depicted, are deposited in the foundations of a stupa or of a Tibetan *chörten.*[95]

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[87] Stein 1912, 52–62.

[88] Stein 1916, 97–109; 1928, 1–53; 1942, 49.

[89] Stein 1928, 13, fig. 5. His 'rock-markings' is the first reference to the rock-carving site of [Hodar] Hodur-Halalosh. Kino Kot (Patelo Kot) and the rock-carving site were finally surveyed by the PGAM in 1989–1990 and 1997–1998 (MANP 3, 1999). On a rocky spur at Nar in the Hodar Valley, at a distance of 2.5 km from the main site, Stein noted the ruins of another small fort, the Dar Kot (see MANP 3, 1999, 102).

[90] Stein 1928, 24–25, 29.

[91] Stein 1928, 25–26 fig. 23–24, 28–30.

[92] Stein 1916, 105; 1928, 30–31 fig. 30; 1942, 54. The wooden mosque of Phugush and the *ziyarat* of Shah Khel, the Muslim missionary from Karor in Swat who became a *shahid*, were again documented by Dani 1989, 106–107 fig. 21 and pl. VIII, 48 c, 49–50.

[93] Jettmar 1975, 200.

At the access to the glacier pass of Darkot that leads to the Baroghil Pass, the route connecting the Gilgit Basin through Yasin with the Wakhan corridor, Stein's attention was drawn to the deeply engraved carving of a 1-m high "cross- or cruciform-shaped" stupa *mrchod-rten* and a Tibetan inscription on a boulder, which lies along the trail about 45 minutes below the edge of the Darkot glacier at an altitude of approximately 4000 m. The inscription, translated by Francke, includes the name of the donor named *Lirnidor*, who apparently originated from Khotan. Francke referred also to corresponding "cross-type" stupas in Ladakh.[96] In view of the resemblance of the parts below the dome to a Christian cross, he termed this type "cross-shaped stupa. This pathway had once been traversed by the victorious Chinese force of 10,000 men under the "protector of the four garrisons" Kao Hsien-chih during his daring campaign of 747 AD through Yasin to the kingdom Po-lü, i.e. Gilgit, occupied until then by the Tibetans.

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[94] Stein 1928, 43. He noted also "eight clay seals", *ts'a-ts'as*, showing the impression in low relief of a stupa "with four tier-base on row of roundels". On the Gupis track, which could have been used also by Chinese pilgrims, see Stein 1928, 41.

[95] The function of *ts'a ts'as* is described by Tucci 1973, 114–118 figs 98–108.

[96] Visit on August 29, 1913: Stein 1928, 45–47, 1050–1051 fig. 46. The Tibetan inscription was translated and discussed by Francke, 'A Tibetan Inscription on the Darkot Pass', in: Stein 1928, appendix L, 1050–1051. Denwood 2007, 49–50 fig. 4 (photo of the Darkot rock) proposes the dates "when this route was in Tibetan hands between 745 and 747" or alternatively "between 820 and the 850s". John Mock revisited the site in 1994 and offers a new translation of the inscription (Mock 2013). [+ H. Falk recently proposed a new reconstruction of the itinerary of Faxian et al. emphasising the importance of the Darkot pass = Falk 2023].

In 1926 a short tour led him on Alexander's track to the Indus through Swat, the ancient kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna, where he identified many sites with Buddhist connotation and particularly the rock Aornos, which was conquered by the Macedonian king.[97]

After his return from a travel to Chinese Turkestan to Gilgit in 1931, Stein studied a collection of jewellery found on a plateau called Dasht-i-Taus on the right bank of the Yasin River.[98] The site displays "a large ruined circumavallation". The finds of delicately decorated rings with seal stones, pendants and beads of gold and silver might be attributed to the 2nd – 3rd century AD and originate from Xinjiang. A bronze figure of a seated Buddha on a lotus throne, also associated with the same findspot, on the contrary, belongs to a group of similar examples from the "Swat valley" dating "between the late 6th and the end of the 6th century".

The territory of Indus Kohistan *(Aba Sind Kohistan)*, the rugged mountain region bordered by Swat in the west and the British reigned Hazara District in the east, had been at that time inaccessible for European explorers. The lower part of the Upper Indus, "compressed into an exceedingly narrow course, passes through a continuous succession of very difficult gorges flanked on either side by the precipitous faces of high mountain spurs".[99] The topographical situation and extremely arduous routes along the river with the byway across the Shandur Pass to Swat convinced Stein that he had found in the Indus ravine the "route of the hanging chains" followed by early Buddhist pilgrims on their way from Ta-li-lo (Darel) to the kingdom Uḍḍiyāna, i.e. Swat. After the Wali of Swat had annexed also the tribal areas east of the Indus into his dominion in 1939, for the first time Stein – at the age of seventy-nine – had the opportunity to follow the imaginable footsteps of the Chinese pilgrims. The three-month expedition lasted from October 1941 to January 1942. During his travel from Swat to the head of the Kana Valley, across the Chundakai Pass down to the side valley of Duber, the team gained entrance to the Kandia Valley by traversing the Bisao Pass. In the centre of the valley at Karang and Richa he again noticed traditional mosques with wood-carving decoration, which reminded him of designs derived from Graeco-Buddhist art. After descending into the Kandia Valley to the deep-cut gorges of the Indus River, he followed the track downstream as far as Besham, "which remained difficult enough and quite impracticable for any laden animal".[100] The track on the opposite left side of the River "clings in places to bare rock walls along narrow ledges, with tree trunks serving as ladders to connect them". The description by Faxian of this "difficult, precipitous and dangerous route, the side of the mountain being like a stone wall ten thousand feet in height" persuaded Stein "to have here one more proof how much reliance can be placed on the topographical sense and power of observation of those old Chinese travellers on whose records the historical geography of India so largely depends". Stein even pointed to a place of an old river-crossing between Besham and the mouth of Ghoraband River, where the Indus flows in a narrow rock-lined bed. Here could have hung the rope bridge, the "Suspended Crossing / Hanging Passage", on which Faxian and his pious fellows crossed the torrent.[101] Nonetheless, the pilgrim's description could be applicable for many other parts of routes along the Upper Indus and its side valleys, such as Karumbar or Hunza. From Besham Stein's team returned across the Karorai Pass to Saidu in Swat.

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[97] Stein 1929 [+ on this see Coloru – Olivieri 2019].

[98] Stein 1932a. Jettmar 1993b, 94.

[99] Stein 1942, 49.

[100] Stein 1942, 54.

Astonishingly, during all these journeys through the Northern Areas between 1900 and 1931 and at last in 1939, no inscriptions or petroglyphs apart from the Tibetan carving at Darkot were observed by Stein. Even though the rock art galleries around Chilas and Thalpan must have been known to colonial officers of the British Gilgit Agency since 1893, when Chilas was brought under its control by a military operation, no information about them ever appeared in publications. It was Redpath, then Assistant Political Agent in Gilgit, who informed Stein in autumn 1941 about the inscription in Proto-Śāradā engraved on a large rock at Hatun in Punial, the by far longest Sanskrit inscription in the Northern Areas. Redpath himself was not able to visit the site. The request of Sir George Cunningham, governor of the Northwest Frontier Province, to start a reconnaissance tour at the border of Kohistan, east of the Indus, offered him also the chance to investigate a reference on the occurrence of rock-carvings.

When Stein was about to set out from Peshawar for his expedition into Indus Kohistan in autumn of the year 1941, G.H. Emerson of the Indian Civil Service brought the existence of inscriptions and pictures below Chilas to his notice. The exact location of them was given to Stein at least in July 1942 by Captain C.D. Murphy, Assistant Political Agent in Chilas, when they met at Naran in the Kaghan Valley. With his own words Stein explained the real reason that drew him to that forbidding area: "A report of numerous rock engravings along the banks of the Indus of which I had not heard before; (it) was a welcome compensation for having to forego entry into tribal territory and also for the physical discomfort of visiting the hot Indus valley this season. Apart from its summer heat, Chilas is notorious for the plague of its fierce local (Indus sand) flies which love to suck the blood of newcomers. On descending from Thor, I too did not escape their attacks. The journey up the absolutely bare bank of the Indus to Chilas village, some 24 miles, is dreaded owing to the heat. There was satisfaction in my being able to determine by paleographic evidence that all these inscriptions, never studied or published before, are older than 6th – 7th century AD. There is good reason to hope that both together will throw interesting light on the spread of Buddhism into the Hindukush as vouched by that old Chinese pilgrim, Fa-hsien".[102]

The pioneering scientific study of rock carvings (Stein used the term "bruisings") and inscriptions from the Upper Indus valley around Gilgit and Chilas is owed to this grand archaeological explorer, whose observations of 1942 were published posthumously.[103] In August 1942, during his journey from Kohistan to Chilas through Thor, where the colonial rest house Dak Bangla is still preserved, he received also information about two bronze vessels, which had come to light in 1940, around 24 km north of Chatorkhand, in a place called Adrach of Garm Chashma, southwest of Imit in the Karumbar Valley.[104] In the bronze cauldron and rhyton, showing a centaur holding the figure of an ibex, he saw evidence for the influence of Hellenistic art on local craftmanship. And, at last, during the same journey along the left side of the Indus at the end of August 1942 he came across artistically executed stupa carvings and Brāhmī inscriptions "below the hamlet of Maruski down to Thore-gah" and at the mouth of the Gichi Valley. Then he gave the first comprehensive descriptions of "a considerable number of Buddhist rock-inscriptions and pictures" that he had observed below the village of Chilas, in the Buto Gah and above the ferry-place across the Indus; now the site is called Chilas I (Jayachand or Chilas Bridge).[105] For the famous scene showing Bodhisattvas with stupas, a vase of plenty, and inscriptions in Brāhmī [Table 20.1], he quite exactly proposed a date "as earlier than the 7th century A.D." One group with a large stupa, three Bodhisattvas and five lines of a Brāhmī inscription was destroyed during the highway construction prior to 1978. Near the riverbed he identified also the huge scene showing the *vyāghri* (Mahāsattva) or *Tigress jātaka*, "the well-known legend of Buddha in a former birth (i.e. before his enlightenment or *bodhi*) as Prince Mahasattva sacrificing his body to a famished tigress in order to save her starving cubs". The legend of Buddha's "body-offering", according to accounts of Chinese pilgrims such as Xuanzang (Hsüantsang) in his description of Siṃhapura, was placed in Gandhara, and there on Mount Banj in the Mahāban hills in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Stein believed to have located this exact site at a place with ruins of a Buddhist sanctuary.[106] Further, he also found a larger Proto-Śāradā inscription topped by the elaborate carving of a stupa on a huge boulder, now located in the village, but without recognizing its historical importance. It names *Vajraśūra*, perhaps one of the local Dard rulers of Chilas during the first half of the 8th century AD.[107] On the other hand, the earlier publication of Buddhist images from Chilas by Ghulam Mohammed seems to have been unknown to Stein. And he obviously did not take notice of the vast concentrations of rock carvings at Thalpan across the river, even though he emphasized the importance of the "much frequented ferrying-place, which many people proceeding from Chilas to the Trans-Indus valleys of Hōdar [Hodur] and Kinērgāh [Kiner Gah] and beyond them to Darēl and Gilgit or vice versa must ordinarily pass, might perhaps be considered as an explanation of such an accumulation of votive gifts".

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[101] Stein 1942, 56: The river bed there near the village Kunshai is about 75 m wide, at the river crossing at Shatial around 93 m, at Hodar 180 m, at Chilas-Thalpan 102 m, and at Shing Nala only 68 m. Jettmar 1987a followed Stein's consideration that the "Suspended Crossing" was identical with the Indus gorges in Kohistan, but described the extreme difficulties of travelling on the old footpath between Shatial at the way out of the Darel Valley and down the Pattan River.

[102] Letter to Mrs. Helen Mary Allen, September 18, 1942.

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[103] Stein 1944, 16–23 pl. IV–V described five groups of Buddhist rock carvings at Chilas Bridge (Jayachand). Group 1 with a stupa, three Bodhisattvas on lotus-seats, and five lines of a Brāhmī inscription fell victim to the highway construction prior to 1978 (Stein 1944, 19 pl. IVa). See Hinüber 1989b, 83 inscription no. 78 and MANP 6, 2003, 43–44 no. 30:B *(Tigress jātaka)*; 98–100 no. 84, pl. XVa/b. with reproductions of Stein's photos pl. IVa. – During earlier visits Stein 1907, 19–20 and 1928, 23 noted ruins of stupas at Jutial above Gilgit, at Henzal ("Hanzil" after Stein) on the way to Punial, 20.4 km from Gilgit, at Thol in the Hunza Valley, and in Yasin.

[104] Stein 1944, 14–16 pl. IIIa. Around Imit two rock carving sites at Dokh and Majaver have been recorded: Tsuchiya 1998b, 58–59.

[105] Stein 1944, 16–24 pl. IIIb (Brāhmī inscription "above the goldwasher's huts of Thore gah") and pl. IVa (= Chilas Bridge, no. 84:2–5, see: MANP 6, 2003, 98–99), pl. IVb (= Chilas Bridge, no. 64: C, 64: 12–19 1,2, see: MANP 6, 2003, 79, 81–84) and pl. Vb (= Chilas Bridge, no. 64:1–2, see: MANP 6, 2003, 79–80).

[106] Beal 1885, I: 145–146. Stein 1905, 38–45.

5 Anthropological Research Between 1955 and 1979

The most persistent impetus for systematic research in the different fields of archaeology, ethnography, epigraphy, and history on the basis of a thorough documentation of archaeological monuments was given by the ethnologist Karl Adam Jettmar.[108] He had joined the Second German Hindukush Expedition (the First Hindukush E xpedition of 1935 was sent to Afghan Nuristan and Chitral)[109] under the lead of the ethnologist Adolf Friedrich of the University of Mainz in 1955 and 1956.[110] This research journey together with the indologist Georg Buddruss and the ethnologist Peter Snoy, then still a student at Friedrich's institute, led from Gilgit to Chilas and from there on horseback in four days along the Indus River, first of all into the once independent "valley republics" of Darel and Tangir, belonging to Yaghistan, the "land of rebellion and freedom", which in 1952 had been just included in the administered part of the Gilgit Agency. The objective of their research was dedicated to ethnological explorations and linguistic studies on the Tangir dialect of Shina and the until then unknown Dardic Kanyawali, which was spoken in a linguistic enclave in the Tangir Valley. Jettmar's study of the lavishly decorated mosques and graves of Darel Valley since the ongoing destructions are of great importance. He modified Stein's hypothesis about elements of Late Antiquity originating from Gandhara in the wooden architectural decoration in this part of Dardistan. Contrary to Stein, he saw two different stylistic tendencies: an older local symbolic world, which is connected to that of Nuristan, and the Late Antique tradition as is obvious in motifs known from Gandharan, Iranian and ancient Indian art. In this part of

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[107] Stein 1944, 21 pl. Va (=Chilas Bridge, no. 36). Dani 1983a, 82–84 no. 63–65, and 1985, 230–232 pl. 4b. Some of Dani's doubtful readings are corrected in Hinüber 1989a, 61–62 no. 62a and MANP 6, 2003, 51–56 [+ The last quote in this paragraph is from Stein 1944, 22].

[108] + Karl A. Jettmar (Vienna, 8 August 1918 – 28 March 2002): see Anonymous 2010.

[109] + See Scheibe, ed. 1937.

[110] Jettmar 1960a, 1980b; 1996a, 81; 2002, 45–79, 80–109. The study of Kanyawali is published in Buddruss 1959 and Jettmar-Thewalt 1987. The aims of this expedition have been described by Buddruss – Snoy 2006 [2008]. For a bibliography of Karl Jettmar, see: Johannsen 2002, Kossack 2003, Hauptmann 2006, Stellrecht 2006. Assemblages of rock carvings in Hunza and Yasin are noted by Desio 1985.

Dardistan the traditional village communities were still intact, and their ideas connected with the belief that the ibex and markhor were considered as sacred beings reminded him of Siberian beliefs. Jettmar described the now almost defunct *wesh* (dividing) system, an egalitarian system of the periodical re-allotment of land, which was introduced by Pakhtun tribes from Swat to Indus Kohistan during 16th century and survived in Darel and Tangir until the 1930s.[111]

On their ride on horseback from Chilas to Harban in 1958, Jettmar noted for the first time carved images of stupas at Thor. At Harban the group crossed the Indus River to the northern bank by a ferry boat to a place with ruins from British colonial times still recall this important crossing point. Along the old path he saw also bruisings on the opposite bank east of the mouth of the Darel River.[112] During this journey to Tangir and Darel he had not even the "faintest idea that I was riding on the tracks of Sir Aurel Stein".[113] From the apparently missing rock carvings on the northern track leading from the mouth of the Darel River to Tangir on the other side, he came to the conclusion that the northern bank was not the main route during the Buddhist past. This impression has been altered since the discovery of a long line of petroglyphs between Issel Das opposite of Harban and the Darel Valley. Later he also visited Baltistan, where he observed still active shamans in the Brokpa villages situated south of Skardu in the upper valleys descending from the Deosai Plateau. He stressed similarities in their cults with those of Eastern Siberia.[114] The 'brog-pa' group, which in Tibetan has the general connotation of "highland herdsmen", according to tradition immigrated before the arrival of the Islam to this area, i.e. 300 years before, from Astor and Chilas. Jettmar's study of the "highlanders", who still today speak Shina, was stimulated by the lively accounts of this Dardic tribe given by Drew, Shaw and Biddulph.[115] In a Brokpa village he noted also a fragmentary Balti version of the Central Asian Kesar Saga, which was earlier reported in Hunza by Lorimer and brought in connection with the hero's legend as known in Ladakh.[116]

With this expedition the 'ethnographic period of research', as Jettmar always emphasized, started in the northern high mountains of Pakistan. His intense historical interests became apparent when he again noticed rock carvings of partly Buddhist contents, such as stupas of the terraced type and the later Tibetan cruciform type and Brāhmī inscriptions, present between Gol and Skardu in Baltistan.[117] The research group had worked in Gilgit, Bagrot, Tangir-Darel, Hunza and Baltistan. Snoy accompanied Friedrich also to Chitral. The Second German Hindukush Expedition was overshadowed by the untimely and tragic death of Adolf Friedrich in Rawalpindi, who had overexerted himself under the hardships of wintertime between 1955 and 1956 in the Kalash valleys of Chitral. This first venture into these still inadequately explored tribal areas initiated the ambitious fields of research by the next generation of cultural anthropologists, geographers, linguists, and lastly archaeologists, too.

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[111] For comprehensive information about the *wesh* system, see: Jettmar 2002, 57–60, 68–70. See also: Staley 1969, 235–236, who refers to the studies of Barth 1956, 32, in Kandia and neighbouring communities of Indus Kohistan, and of Jettmar 1960a, 134 and 1961a, 85–86.

[112] Jettmar 1991b, 251 [+ Jettmar 1996b].

[113] Jettmar 1996[a], 86.

[114] + HH left here a side note: "eher Bezug zu Tangir-Darel?".

[115] Drew 1875, 433, Shaw 1878, Biddulph 1880, 46–54. Jettmar 2002, 38–39. See Shaw 1878; Buddhist and Muslim, four casts like in Chilas Clark 1977, 338.

[116] Jettmar visited Baltistan in September 1955: Jettmar 1977[a], 1990; see also Jettmar 1979c. About the Kesar Saga in Hunza, see Lorimer 1931 and in Ladakh, see Francke 1905. Sagaster 1984 recorded during his visits in 1980 and 1981 in Baltistan several versions of the Kesar Saga. [+ In the manuscript of the References HH also quoted Jettmar 1990a; see also Jettmar 1996b].

A corresponding short ethnographic survey was undertaken in Indus Kohistan (known as Aba Sind Kohistan by the Swatis), a blank area on the cultural and linguistic map of South Asia, by the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth in the summer of 1954. Barth collected information about the economy and sociology and provided initial insight into the two Kohistani dialect groups occupying an area of the western tributaries and the west bank of the Indus River between Besham and Tangir and the communities Jalkot and Palas on the east bank of the River. His sometimes contradictory records about the subsistence economy, the distribution of the different ethnic groups and languages in the Kohistan were corrected by Jettmar.[118]

An invitation of the Austrian Himalaya Society enabled Jettmar to return to the high mountain region in 1958 as a member of the Austrian Haramosh Expedition. Mount Haramosh in Baltistan (7497) was conquered under the leadership of Heinrich Roiss, who died during his attempt to master Mount Dhaulagiri in the next year. As the third scientific member of the expedition, organized by the geographer Konrad Wiche and the zoologist Eduard Piffl of Vienna University, Jettmar was able to visit again Gilgit and the Gilgit Valley as far as Gupis, and then the valleys of Darel, Tangir, and also of Gor, from where he returned to Gilgit.[119] His reconnaissance of the Haramosh Valley east of Gilgit yielded within the still living spiritual world of a pagan past the veneration of a local protective goddess called Murkum, similar to other valley gods, such as Saiyabān in the Sai Valley, Taiban in Gor, Naron in Chilas and Halabān in Darel.[120] Northeast of Gilgit, on the road to Hunza, he discovered the boulder with an inscription of five lines in Sanskrit in the village of Danyor, near the confluence of the rivers Hunza and Gilgit. Next to the inscribed rock of Hatun it is the second important historical inscription that refers to the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty without naming it. It was engraved by the high archivist Narendra in the name of the local overlord Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī. It forms a decree dating from 19 February 687 AD.[121] The mentioned overlord *(parameśvara śrī)*, known also from inscriptions on Kashmir bronzes, was successor to Navasurendrādityanandī, the fifth ruler of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty, engraved in the royal inscription of Hatun.

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[117] Jettmar 1959a, 110; 1977, 284 and 1990b, 808–809 fig. 8. Buddruss – Snoy 2006 [2008].

[118] Barth 1956 was able to travel for only two weeks through those valleys of Kohistan in the west of the Indus River, which were then controlled by the Wali of Swat. His records therefore convey an incomplete view of the subsistence and economy, the so-called '*wesh*'-system, the ethnic groups and their languages and Kohistani dialects, see: Jettmar 1983b and 2002, 68–70.

[119] A report of Jettmar's "Ethnological research in Baltistan 1958" was published in Jettmar 1961a. A report on observations on the geography and economy of the region is owed to Wiche 1958.

[120] See his reports on ethnological researches in Dardistan, where he was accompanied by his interpreter Rhaban Hassan, the head constable of the Gilgit police: Jettmar 1958; 1959a; 1959b; 1960b; 1961a; 1965; 1980a, 35–39; 2002, 5–6, 198.

During this field research campaign, Snoy observed in 1955 the assemblages of petroglyphs showing ibexes and hunting scenes between the villages Sinakar and Bulchi in the Bagrot Valley of the Gilgit District, which had been earlier noted by Ghulam Muhammad. Above all Snoy discovered the vast rock carving clusters with numerous inscriptions near Sassi, a village at the exit of the Rondu gorge, on the right side of the Indus and before its junction with the Gilgit River.[122] At this site, which extends in the narrow valley of the Indus from its exit of the Rondu gorge to its junction with the Gilgit River near the Alam Bridge, Jettmar for the first time in 1958 and again in 1973 noticed images in the style of Scythian and Achaemenid art and Buddhist inscriptions. He designated this huge and next to Haldeikish, Chilas-Thalpan and Shatial indeed singular concentration of rock carvings along the ancient routes leading from Baltistan to the important ancient river crossing into the Indus Valley near the modern Alam Bridge not only as an important halting station for caravans, but also as a "bridge sanctuary".[123] The river crossing apparently served as a control post on the roads from Skardu or Astor and the route systems traversing the Karakorum and Hindukush passes to the Tarim Basin.

Jettmar stimulated the indologist Gérard Fussman to examine the inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī and one inscription in Tibetan. Fussman was able to start his investigations there in 1976, which led to the first publication of Indian inscriptions of the until 1979 still unexplored rock art province between Shatial and Hunza-Haldeikish.[124] The earlier inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī from the time of the Kuṣāṇa Empire are concentrated on the rocks of assemblage A–B along the ancient track above the Gilgit River. One inscription of two lines, perhaps written in proto-Burushaski, was read as '*Daradaraya merekhisu dhadasu urmu ragasaṃpiioja bhajru satradu*', mentioning the "king of the Dardes". Two of the inscriptions in Brahmi, the majority of which are found in the clusters E–F, name persons under the ethnic designation '*palolaj(o)'* referring to a tribe or territory such as Bolor, normally equated with Baltistan, reigned by the dynasty of the Palola Ṣāhi. The exact location of the enigmatic mountains of Bolor, the country Po-lu-lo as described for the first time by Xuanzang, and since Marco Polo's mention sought by different British travellers, still belongs to one of those mysterious lands like Atlantis or Eldorado. Referring to the former discussion Curzon demonstrated, "that Bolor, or Bilaur, was the name applied throughout the Middle Ages to the elongated belt of mountain country south of the main range of the Hindu Kush, including the valleys of Kafiristan, Upper Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit, and Hunza-Nagar" or "having even a wider application".[125] If we follow suggestions that Bolor is a mishearing of 'bala' meaning 'upper, i.e. the higher regions of any valley or tract, then it apparently was not circumscribing a real geographical region, but was only a descriptive term.[126] Some other graffiti with historical reference mention a 'Raja of Guda' in Kashmir, and a Yavaraja, a hereditary prince.

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[121] The complete publication of the inscription is owed to Hinüber 2004, 52–57 no. 23, who corrected earlier datings to ca. 730/731 by Jettmar 2002, 159. For epigraphical evidence of both overlords, see Hinüber 2004, 89–95. For earlier interpretations, see: Fussman 1978, 4. Jettmar 1980c [+ ?], 186; 2002, 126, 138, 159; Dani 1995, 77; 2001, 151.

[122] Snoy 1975, 224–225 figs 111–118.

[123] Jettmar 1975, 314 fig. 8. Fussman 1978, 11 pl. XI, 17. Jettmar 1979, 920 fig. 3 and 2002, 96 fig. 9. These assemblages of graffiti were discovered in 1955 by P. Snoy, member of the German Hindukush expedition 1955/56 (Snoy 1975, 224–225 figs 111–118). The drawings of two animals, found by Jettmar in 1958, were brought in connection with the Achaemenid style for the first time by Fussman 1978, 23. A critical review of his readings of the Brāhmī inscriptions is owed to Humbach 1980b.

[124] Fussman 1978, 8–64 pl. 1, 3–32. Jettmar 2002, 101–102, 117. For the Palola Ṣāhi inscriptions see Hinüber 2004, nos 27a–b.

Jettmar also added an important group of metal artefacts to the still modest assemblage of archaeological materials in Gilgit-Baltistan by publishing a Late Bronze Age hoard of bronze implements said to have been found in 1956 near the *kot* (fortress) of Manikhal in Darel. Consisting of seven axes of the types with shaft-hole and trunnion, and a bronze bowl of later date, this "hoard" may not represent one single complex, yet Jettmar rightly dated one "flat trunnion celt" to the late 2nd millennium BC.[127] This axe type has parallels in Iran; it belongs to a common weapon form of more symmetrical shaped contour with trunnions *(Ärmchenbeil)*, which is widespread in Western Asia.[128]

During these expeditions and travels in the subsequent years in 1964 (Gilgit and Punial), 1971 (Gilgit, Gupis, Yasin, Chitral, Baltistan), 1973 (Chitral, Gilgit, Astor, Rondu), 1975 and 1978 clusters of rock carvings were noted. The most successful outcome of Jettmar's research travels was the discovery of a group of 10 boulders with petroglyphs, mainly of Buddhist origin, found on a plateau called Godomut (Ghotōmut) at Hōl near Gakuch in Punial. Two of the boulders showed simple images of ibexes, but the others disclosed *mChod-rten*, the Tibetan type of stupa, accompanied by Tibetan standard donor inscriptions, which obviously represent Bon-po Tantras. The author of the inscription of stone 2 is *dPal 'Dus sGra*, the *blon* (councillor) of the *Brsha khri ris*, who was in charge of the dominion of Brusha. The original arrangement of the stones above the mouth of the Ishkoman into the Gilgit River and opposite the site of Hatun was unfortunately not documented during Jettmar's first visits on September 15, 1964 and again in 1971 to describe this place as a Tibetan sanctuary of a community practising the bon-pos religion. Two other carved stones were found when the boulders were collected by the sub-regional department of archaeology prior to 1988 and transported to Gilgit. The images of nine *mChod-rten* were described and the seven inscriptions translated by Klaus Sagaster.[129] On eight boulders the "cross-shaped" and terraced form of the stupa resembles the same type as known from Baltistan and Ladakh and as depicted on a boulder at the approach to Darkot Pass, which was interpreted by Stein as a testimony of Tibetan occupation in Little Palur.[130] Obviously, both monuments seem to manifest the westernmost expansion of Tibetan supremacy in the region south of the Karakorum Range (or the control of the Yasin and Ishkoman routes after they had conquered the Wakhan between 730 and 733). After the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan (Great Palur) between 690 and 704 Tibetan forces tried to invade the plain of Gilgit, Bruža (Little Palur), between 720 and 722. According to Denwood the Gakuch inscriptions were produced "perhaps between 720 and 753, perhaps between 755 and 815, or between 820 and the 850s".[131] Jettmar's field work in Dardistan and Baltistan between 1955 and 1973 was directed first of all at the historical interpretation of ancient beliefs and customs. These far-reaching studies finally[132] resulted not only in his first monography on the *Religions of the Hindukush* (1986), but also culminated in the discovery of a widely unknown rock art province. In 1973, when Jettmar travelled with Max Klimburg again along the old still unmetalled Indus Valley track in this formerly forbidden land and revisited the striking concentration of petroglyphs in different styles between Sazin in Kohistan and Chilas at Harban, Minar Gah and Thor on the left bank of the river,[133] he realized the significance of the clusters of rock carvings in tribal territory, which at that time was mostly inaccessible. The discovery near Thor of the first bruising of a crouching beast of prey with its limbs ending in rings, actually representing the Eurasian animal style, turned out to be even further archaeological evidence for the presence of northern nomads in the Indus Valley, after the discovery of two bronze vessels at Imit in Ishkoman by Stein. The view of the "grand old archaeological explorer" that the Scytho-Siberian animal style did not intrude into this region could no longer be maintained, since B. A. Litvinskij had referred to Saka invasions into the mountain areas.[134] The identification of the drawing, showing a crouching predator with its legs ending in circles after Jettmar's own words, was the "crucial experience" that the study of rock-art in this region "would be most rewarding" as a primary historical source.[135] He thereupon developed a conception for an integrated archaeological exploration of these petroglyphs, which he submitted for the first time to the Association of South Asian Archaeologists during their meeting in Naples in 1977, with the title "Archaeology before Excavation".[136] But with the start of the Karakorum Highway construction as a Pak-Chinese enterprise in 1975, plans to revisit these sites had to be postponed.

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[125] Curzon 1896, 247 summarizing the different localizations of Bolor by Yule, Elphinstone, Cunningham and Raverty.

[126] Keay 1996, 129 referring to the localizations given by Gardiner to Forsyth, and by Younghusband to Pearse. The different evidence of Bolor is summarized by Dani 2001, 39–43.

[127] Archaeological Museum of Karachi: Jettmar 1961b, 1967a, 75 fig. 21. Mughal 1985, 215–216 fig. 1–7, 10–15. Tusa 1985, 179–180 postulates for the "trunnion axe" a date to the 1st millennium BC. Dani 2001, 112, 421.

[128] A trunnion axe of the same type from Shalozan, Kurram Valley in Sulaiman Range (Peshawar Museum) was published in Coggin Brown 1917, see: Wheeler 1968, 115 fig. 25, 2 and Allchin – Allchin 1968, 152 fig. 31, 6.8, who suggested Caucasian or Iranian contacts on the basis of the equivalent type at Shalozan (Type III after Maxwell-Hyslop 1953); see also: Dani 2001, 427, photos 63 no. 4 and Dar 2006, 130 fig. 34a. For the trunnion axe *(Ärmchenbeil)* in Anatolia and from other parts in Western Asia, see: Erkanal 1977, 3–12 (especially type V).

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[129] Jettmar 1975, 298 fig. 5. Jettmar – Sagaster 1993. With the exception of two boulders stored in the Taxila Museum (photo in: Halim – Baig 1995, 8 together with other carved boulders from Chilas), the other carvings (one stone seems to have been lost) are kept since 1988 in Gilgit: in the Department of Archaeology & Museums at Gilgit, the Biddulph Library (stone 6), and in the private house of the late Ali Ahmad Jan of Nagir (stone 2 and 7).

[130] Stein 1928, 46–47. A new description of the Darkot boulder is presented in Mock 2013.

[131] Denwood 2007, 50. [+ Here HH added this side note: "Nils Martin's re-examination of the inscriptions does not support this early dating in regard to their palaeography or orthography". The source of this quote is Martin 2017: 201].

[132] Jettmar 1975.

[133] These "historically important clusters of petroglyphs" were known to Jettmar since 1955: Jettmar 1979a, 920; 1980c, 186; 1991, 1–2. This travel along the KKH is described in Klimburg 2008.

During the period of restricted access to the Northern Areas Jettmar was at least able to make further inquiries regarding local versions of the famous Central Asian Kesar Saga in Baltistan, which he had traced for the first time in 1955 in a Brokpa village in the uppermost valley accessing the Deosai plains.[137] A group of rocks there called Phontaku was said to be the birthplace of the hero. The member of his team, A. Nayyar, noted in Rondu a version of the epic, which was handed down there in the former princedom. He recorded another version at Kuru, a village near the former small principality of Kiris in Shyok Valley. The Tibetologist Klaus Sagaster was stimulated by this discovery and recorded the epic of king Kesar (Gesar, Kiser), who had conquered Baltistan, as well as other folk tales of legendary kings in the villages Rgyayul and Astana near Skardu, around Shigar and in Eastern Baltistan. His studies on different versions of the Kesar epic, which was also popular in Hunza and in Ladakh, was an important step in unveiling a treasure of Balti oral traditions, which meanwhile has vanished from the memories of the population. Contrary to the ancient folk songs – Balti *rgyang-khlu* – and the epical songs – Balti *zdrung-khlu* – these stories lack any historical elements.[138]

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[134] Litvinskij 1963 and 1964. [+ In connection with the topic 'nomads and central Asia', the reader may also find interesting Spengler et al. 2021, with refs].

[135] Jettmar was not able to find the animal carving again during his journey with Dani in 1979, yet he did rediscover the image in 1983: Jettmar 1975, 305–307 fig. 6 (west of Thor). Jettmar 1979a, 921–922 fig. 4 (near Thor), Jettmar 1996[a], 87. In 1981 he identified another drawing of an ibex as representative of the animal style at Minar Gah: Jettmar 1982a, 4–5; 1983a, 162 fig. 8; 1984b, 76–77 fig. 2; 1991, 1 fig. 4.

[136] Jettmar 1979a. A concept for the exploration of the rock art galleries was presented for the first time during the "Fourth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists" in Naples in 1977: Jettmar 1979a. See also Jettmar 2002, 87–88.

[137] Between 28 August and 3 September 1978, he visited Rondu, Skardu and Kiris together with A. Nayyar and D. Buddenberg, and following earlier researches about the Kesar epic by Francke 1902b he later in September and October continued his studies in Ladakh: Jettmar 1977[a], 1979c, 1990a, 1996b.

[138] Sagaster visited Baltistan in 1980, 1981 and 1983: Sagaster 1981, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989. See also Söhnen 1984, 1985. About the Kesar Saga in Ladakh, see: Francke 1902b, 1905–1941.

6 The Project ‘Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway’ of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1979–2013

The decision to start the projected systematic exploration of the rock art galleries had to wait for foreigners until the final opening of the new Indus Valley Road, the Karakorum Highway (henceforth: KKH), in 1978.[139] When Jettmar returned to Pakistan in 1979 on the recommendation of the Ministry of Culture, he was able to persuade Ahmad Hasan Dani from the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad to join as experienced archaeologist and competent epigraphist to coordinate the work of the Pakistani team in a joint Pak-German collaboration.[140] During an initial investigation trip some of the rock art sites along the Karakorum Highway, also called the China-Pakistan Friendship Highway, were noted. In Chilas near the river crossing to Thalpan along the terrace called Jayachand the team “was struck” by the elaborate Buddhist carvings and inscriptions, earlier noticed by Ghulam Muhammad and Stein. From Gilgit they again visited the rock with the famous Proto-Śāradā inscription of Danyor before they reached Karimabad – within the “lost kingdom in the Himalayas” – for the first time. There, in the Hunza Valley near Ganesh, the unknown site of Haldeikish, i.e in Burushaski “the hunting place of the male ibexes”, was shown to them by Sulaiman Shah, a member of the Ruby Mining Project of Hunza on October 11.[141] The numerous carvings of the ibex and “Buddhist” testimonies inspired Dani to coin the name “Sacred Rock(s) of Hunza” for this group of four rocks bordering the deep gorge of the river in the east. The four rock outcroppings near a ford across the Hunza River, which is now crossed by a bridge for the Karakorum Highway, are covered with 1712 carvings, the majority showing simple drawings of mounting goats, hunting scenes, and few images of historical importance. These ibex drawings that predominate the rock faces as seen from the ancient track and the modern highway indicate the function of the area as resting places for hunting parties and for ceremonies connected with the ibex game, known as *thuma saling* in the local tradition. A legend refers to a ritual in which a male ibex drawn on the rock would cause human pregancy.[142]

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[139] Hamid 1979, 159, 173. Kreutzmann 2009.

[140] The “Pak-German Study Group” started its journey on October 6, 1979 from Islamabad to Gilgit (Jettmar 1980b, 156; 1982a, 5–6). In Chilas Jettmar and Dani noticed on October 8, 1979, the assemblage of Buddhist carvings on the terrace of Jayachand (Chilas I), discovered by Ghulam Muhammad. Shatial was visited by Jettmar after his return to Chilas on October 25 and again on November 9, 1979. The team returned to Islamabad on November 24.

[141] Jettmar and Dani travelled from Gilgit to Hunza on October 11, 1979. Jettmar 1980b, 161–163 and 1980c, 186–191. Dani 1985a and 1995, 84–101. The site Haldeikish is also referred to as the place of the ibexes of the cannibal king Shri Badat, according to local tradition the last Buddhist ruler of Gilgit. A systematic survey and topographical documentation which enlarged the number of petroglyphs was undertaken there by the PGAM. Jason Neelis visited in 1995–1996 the site and clarified several initial readings by Dani (Neelis 2000, 2006, 2011).

[142] Dani 1985a, 7.

The Sacred Rocks are significantly highlighted by the great number of 133 inscriptions: 65 – Kharoṣṭhī, 60 – Brāhmī, 4 – Sogdian, 2 – Bactrian, 1 – Chinese, 1 Tibetan. It is striking that this important epigraphic monument was not noticed earlier by foreign travellers. This fact can be explained by the position of the old road, prior to the construction of the KKH, which leads from Karimabad to the Kilik or Kunjerab passes between Altit to Pasu above the western bank of the Indus River, just opposite Haldeikish.[143] The singular epigraphic monument has been severely affected by the new alignment of the KKH since 2010.

The known monumental Buddha reliefs of Naupura and Manthal were enriched in 1979 by a singular monument, a large boulder of steep pyramidal form with a triangular base which shows carved Buddha images on three of four sides. The monolith came to light during work in a field near the village of Bubur in Punial.[144] Jettmar paid the land owner a reward in order to prevent the imminent blasting of the pagan work of art. On the order of prince Ali Ahmad Jan, then chief of the Gilgit police (SSP), the boulder was finally transported from Bubur to Gilgit. Only after the large boulder was split into two halves, could the transport without further mutilations be organized before 1983. The more representative half was fixed to the outer wall of the prince's private residence at Gilgit, and the other part was placed in the garden behind the house. Because of a still non-existent museum at Gilgit, the centre of Gilgit-Baltistan, this singular monument is still kept on private grounds.[145] Jettmar interpreted the figures on two faces of the boulder as the standing Śākyamumi, whose style and clothing resembles the monumental Buddha on the Naupura relief. Two smaller reliefs on the level of the feet of one standing Buddha depict a sitting Mañjuśrī. In the figure on the third face he saw the seated Padmapāṇi wearing a three-pointed crown.[146] Jettmar recognized in the standing figures with their large broad faces obvious resemblances to the stone *balbal*s, human-shaped stone figures which were erected at memorial complexes and kurgans of ancient Turkic tribes in the 6th to 13th centuries AD in Central Asia, the Altai and in Mongolia. The stone figures represent enemies who the deceased Göktürk hero had slain during his life. They were described for the first time by the Franciscan William of Rubruck in 1253. Distinct from the *balbal*, are life-size anthropomorphic figures in granite which express the ancestor cult of the ancient Göktürks. According to Jettmar the Bubur reliefs belong to the end of the Buddhist period in the Northern Areas, a horizon which is characterized by the "Saka Itinerary" drawn up during the second half of the 10th century. Therefore he suggested a date in the 10–11th century. Baubura with its four monasteries, as Bubur is called in the "Itinerary", and Little Palūr were then occupied by Turkic invaders.

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[143] In 1925 the Dutch Karakorum-Expedition followed this route: Visser 1926, 78–79 with map.

[144] Jettmar 1984a, 214–215 plate III–IV; 1993b, 95; 1995, 47–49 fig. 1–4; 2002, 106, 134–135, 200–201 fig. 27, 1–3 suggests a date in 10–11th century.

[145] + See on that Hakal 2015, and especially Hakal 2022 (for the present location and conditions of the Bubur reliefs A, B, and C).

[146] + The image shows close resemblance with the bodhisattva of Jare (C 107) in Swat (Filigenzi 2015: 218–219, fig. 108).

These discoveries made since his first visit of the Northern Areas were the initiative to establish the "Pak-German Study Group for Anthropological Research in the Northern Areas". "To encourage research on various aspects of the Cultural and Natural factors and features" in the Northern Areas, the Ministry of Culture initiated in 1979 a separate archaeological mission to the Upper Indus region to get an idea of the importance of the petroglyphs along the Karakorum Highway.[147] This scientific approach resulted in establishing the Sub-regional Office of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Gilgit in September 1981. This institution should develop into a valuable partner for the Pak-German Study Group and support its field research for years ahead.

During a first official field campaign in 1980, which was organized on behalf of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) at Bonn and in cooperation with Dani, director of the Centre for the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, with Uxi Mufti, the executive director of Lok Virsa, National Institute of Folk Heritage Islamabad, and with Mian Said Qamar as representative of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Karachi, the site of Haldeikish, "the place of male ibexes" (*haldén* is the Burushaski word for male ibex), near Ganesh in the Hunza Valley was documented. The photographic documentation of the rock carvings and inscriptions was organized by Thewalt.[148] A first reading and edition of the inscriptions is indebted to Dani. The conspicuous diversity of the inscriptions is evidence for the role of the site as a resting place for travellers along the transregional network of routes between Central and South Asia. The site represents not only a way-station between the route leading from Xinjiang across the passes Kilis and Mintaka to Gilgit, but also provides access to a track to the Nager Valley and farther across the Hispar Glacier to Baltistan. The historical importance, especially of the Chinese inscription consisting of twelve characters, which should awake great attention by sinologists, was first recognized by K. Sagaster. It records that "Wei-long, envoy of Great Wei (is) now dispatched to Mi-mi" [Table 30.1]. Mi-mi, a Central Asian state known as Mâymurgh from classical Arabic sources and from annals of the Great Wei Dynasty (386–556 AD), is located not far from Kand Country, present-day Samarkand in the north of the middle Syr Darya in Central Asia.

After other ethnographic studies in Astor and in Gor Jettmar returned to Chilas, where he first became aware of the extraordinary wealth and diversity of the rock art galleries around

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[147] The members of the mission were Syed M. Ashfaque and M. Rafique Mughal: Ashfaque 2005.

[148] Jettmar undertook his exploration journey between July 23 and October 8,1980 (Jettmar 1981c, 307). There a simultaneous photogrammetric recording of the monument by V. Thewalt had also been started, but without the necessary topographical survey. A first comprehensive publication of the "Sacred Rock" with a reading of its inscriptions is indebted to Dani 1985a, who also gave a description of the local topography (see Dani 1995, 84–101 and Dar 2006, 186–188). The Chinese inscription was translated and commented by Yong 1986 [repr. 1989]. Höllmann 1993 gave an altered reading ("Wei Long, envoy of Great Wei, now dispatched to Mimi"), which revealed not "something concrete new" after Deeg 2005, 101–102 footnote 455. The localization of Mi Country has been discussed by Sverchkov 2009, too.

Chilas and the zone downstream along the Indus River to Thor, and at last to the westernmost site Shatial, situated in the district of Indus Kohistan in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), formerly North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).[149] During the reconnaissance trip of the previous year along the new Karakorum Highway, for the first time he had entered on October 25, 1979, near the village of Shatial into the large accumulation of rock carvings, which extends on both sides of the access to the bridge leading into the two valleys, Tangir on the west and Darel on the east. With gratitude he recalled to Mohammad Ismail Khan, the Deputy Commissioner of the Diamer District in Chilas, who gave the decisive reference to this site with one of the most magnificent monuments of Buddhist art: it consisted of a *triptychon* with a monumental stupa of Central Asian type in the centre, flanked by the representation of the well-known *Śibi Jātaka* on the left side and of a smaller pagoda-like stupa on the right [Table 22.1]. Jettmar saw in the singular delicate drawing the work created by an artist who was familiar with Chinese art of the Wei or early T'ang period. Even though this monument, near an ancient fort securing the river crossing to the Darel Valley, was visible also from the old Indus Valley road, it seems to have been disregarded by earlier travellers. Nicholas Sims-Williams, who had joined the team in September 1985, noticed the large cluster of at least 610 Middle Iranian inscriptions, which "belong to the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.", suggesting that the site was a Sogdian emporium and the place of a sacred shrine. The site of Shatial Bridge with the ruins of the Shatial Fort was surveyed more closely by Thewalt in 1987.[150]

During his first journey on a short track on the northern bank of the Indus into the valleys of Darel and Tangir in 1955, Jettmar had observed only few traces of rock carvings, even though the ancient track is lined by numerous carvings. Therefore, he doubted that there would be the same zones with petroglyphs on the opposite bank of the river. The discovery of the rock carving clusters in Thalpan, just on the opposite side of Chilas-Yayachand, an important river crossing, and of other sites on the northern bank, such as Hodar [Hodur] and Thor North at the end of this field campaign, opened at last a wide outlook for future research. The decision not to start "a systematic documentation, step by step", as would have been normal in an archaeological survey project of this dimension, was influenced by the experience of the increasing damage to the rock carvings on the rock faces and boulders, caused by the need for building materials for the construction of new houses, bridges and roads. For this reason, the survey of "the areas bordering the highway had and still have priority". Another reason to concentrate the research of the rock art galleries along the highway was the plan in the 1980ies to build a dam at Basha "transforming the Indus valley into a lake, which would mean the inundation of most of the historically importance of petroglyphs".[151]

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[149] Jettmar returned to Chilas on October 9, 1979. During these investigations of the sites there he was accompanied by the retired Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ismail Khan, who also gave the decisive reference to Shatial. He visited the site on October 25 and again on November 9, 1979. Jettmar 1980a, 15–16; 1991b; 1993c, 53–54.

[150] Jettmar 1991b, 252; 2002, 113 [+ see also Zahir et al. 2022].

[151] Jettmar 1989c, XXVIII–XXIX.

During this first field season of the Pak-German Study Group also anthropological and linguistic studies were carried out: the ethnologist Irmtraud Müller-Stellrecht in Hunza, Adam Nayyar, doctoral candidate of Jettmar, in Astor, the linguists Georg Buddruss in Gilgit, and Klaus Sagaster and Renate Söhnen-Thieme in Baltistan. In the same year the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan, which has been active in Swat since 1955, undertook a survey of ancient sites and of the traditional wooden architecture in the Darel Valley.[152] Ruins of ancient fortified towns (so-called *kot*s) at Gayal, Phugush, Ghomal and Manikyal had been noted by Stein. The main aim of the Italian mission was to search for Ta-li-lo, which had been described by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang in his travelogue as the "the capital of U-chang-na",[153] i.e. Uḍḍiyāna now equated with Swat. At Soni Kot near Gumari the Mission seemed to confirm Tucci's expectations in revealing a sacred area with the remains of a stupa on a square base and rectangular rooms on two sides.[154] The fragment of a Buddhist cult-bronze from this site was delivered by Jettmar to the Department of Archaeology and Museums in Karachi.[155] Unfortunately the results of the survey have not been finally published.[156] In the ancient cemetery on a hillock at Manikyal Payin, just near the old city, graves could be investigated. One such examined burial revealed a "big globular urn containing burnt bones and ashes and covered by a flat stone lid".[157] The burial pit also contained some other small pots with red surface. One of them, a bowl-on-stand, is paralleled in the grave pottery of the once called "Gandhara Grave Culture".[158]

In the northern part of the Darel Plain, at Toki Kot above the Hychot River, ruins of another Buddhist site, probably a monastery, were observed. But, as noted above, the localization of Ta-li-lo in Darel is clearly refuted by Faxian's travelogue. The journey from Ta-li-lo to to his destination Uḍḍiyāna required 15 days, and on his way the traveller had to cross the river

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[152] Faccenna 1980. Tusa 1985. In 1999 M. Nasim Khan visited the Darel Valley and published artifacts found in an Iron Age cemetery near the village of Muzot in Samigal Payan. He also mentions two rock carving sites at Lal Kot and Kuera Khan Das above Samigal showing images of ibexes and hunting scenes, but no Buddhist motifs: Nasim Khan 1999–2000.

[153] Beal 1884, I 134. "The old seat of the government of Uḍḍiyāna", after Watters 1904–1905, I 239.

[154] Tusa 1985, 183 fig. 6

[155] Jettmar 1995, 38–39; 2002, 192. The rock art assemblages of Thalpan were discovered by Jettmar 1980b, 183, when he crossed the newly constructed Chilas-Thalpan bridge on November 6, 1979.

[156] + Recently two shards inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī, found in Darel at Urali-chuck, were published (Callieri – Olivieri 2020: 297–299). The bronze axes (*Ärmchenbeil*-like) collected by S. Tusa, have been recently re-documented, inventoried and handed over to the Swat Museum in Saidu Sharif.

[157] The decorated burial urn is depicted by Dani 1983a, 60–62 no. 41, who summarized the archaeological results of the Italian survey, see also: Dani 2001, 112.

[158] Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri 2011. [+ Here the footnote was reconstructed, as there was a gap in the manuscript. HH knew that Dani's definition "Gandhara Grave Culture" was obsolete. Now preferred for Swat and neighbouring areas is "Swat [or Dir] Protohistoric Graves". See *Science* Sept. 2019 (Narasinham et al. 2019; see also Micheli and Vidale 2015, but especially Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri eds 2015). The chronology of the Swat graveyards is now clearly defined between 1200 and 800 BCE].

Indus. So, when the first known Chinese pilgrim set out for Swat, why should he take the by far troublesome route back to the Indus gorge and from there again via Kohistan to the Swat Valley? As pointed out above, the Buddhist sanctuary Ta-li-lo may be more convincingly situated around the religious and political centre of Chilas-Thalpan.

As a result of the appreciable economic development, which initiated also a change in the social life in Gilgit-Baltistan, the traditional wooden mosques [Tables 37.1–2], which represent all the wealth of local building traditions and ancient artistic heritage in this region, are going to be replaced by modern buildings. An urgent survey of these monuments in Indus Kohistan and the Northern Areas, which do not seem to date further back than the mid 18th century, was started also as a part of the anthropological research conducted by the Pak-German team between 1980 and 1985, and later in cooperation with the Italian team, too.[159] During his research of 1955 and 1958 in the valleys of Darel and Tangir, Jettmar studied the settlement system and the vernacular architecture with its rich traditional wood carving, especially on religious architecture.[160] He referred also to decorations on traditional houses and fortified towers with their door frames, lintels and pillars with their capitals. Like Stein he saw in the villages, which due to the rivalry between the valleys display the typical farmsteads called *kot* equipped with defence towers, and also Buddhist motifs in the decoration of wooden frames of windows and doors and grave enclosures.[161] Symbolic motifs reveal different local styles, such as the "Kohistani Style" in the Indus Valley or that in the Swat Valley with influences of Mughal architecture or in the western Himalayas of Kashmiri art.

With the introduction of Islam the structure of the villages underwent changes, and only few places have preserved the ancient organisation form. Sazin in the northeastern corner of Indus Kohistan at the extreme western end of the Great Himalayas was such an example, which during the visit of Jettmar and Nayyar in 1982 formed the object of an intended systematic survey of this village fortress *(kot* or *koṭ).* The research work there had to be postponed until 1987 when the architect Peter Alford Andrews could carry out his exemplary study for about six months, which represents until now a singular village documentation in Northern Pakistan.[162] Sazin in the short side-valley on the left bank of the Indus was at that

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[159] A project to document religious architecture and related wood-carvings in Dir, Swat and Indus Kohistan was carried out by the Islamic team of the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan (IsIAO) between 1968–1986, but there is unfortunately no final publication available: Scerrato 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985. Noci 2006. An IsIAO Ethnographic Project was started in 2006 under I. E. Scerrato to survey vernacular architecture in Baltistan: Scerrato [E.I.] 2011. Noci 2006, 271–273. Between 1962–1967 Uwe Topper studied decorated grave enclosures in Kohistan: Topper 2000. For a comprehensive study of the wooden style in the Northern Areas, see Dani 1989, Klimburg 1997 and 2005. See also the survey of the fortified village of Sazin in Kohistan by Peter Alford Andrews in 1987. [+ published in Andrews – Jettmar 2000].

[160] Jettmar 1959a and Jettmar, in: Andrews – Jettmar 2000, 1–9, 109–121.

[161] For Gandharan ornaments in the vernacular architecture, see: Schmitt 1971.

[162] Andrews – Jettmar 2000. For a review of this monographic study, see Frembgen 2003. An urgent demand to research and preserve the cultural heritage in Indus Kohistan is stated by Jettmar 1985c.

time still an intact village of farmsteads with the characteristic fortified clusters of houses and their watch-towers, which reminded Jettmar of Castel Gandolfo in Italy, and so he called it "a segmentary republic" – an autonomous political unit and tribal territory. In contrast to the somewhat superficial study of religious architecture in this area by Dani, there now exists a mapping and description of the mosque in Sazin *kot*. The exemplary survey included the study of the traditional architecture, social organization of the inhabitants in the three casts – Shin, Yeshkun and Kamin, and also of the economy, various crafts and material culture.

In 1981 the same Pak-German team started the systematic survey of petroglyphs in the Upper Indus Valley itself, around Chilas and in Thalpan within the Diamer District, where Jettmar had found in his own words: a "fairy-land of rock carvings", connected with "a sort of proto-Karakorum Highway" in 1979 and 1980.[163] Thus, the designation "visitor's book of the Silk Road" came into existence. With these paraphrases he obviously referred to the earlier explanation of the engravings by Ghulam Muhammad: "the tradition is that in ancient times the land was frequently visited by fairies, who used to make these descriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man's power to produce such inscriptions".[164] Jettmar also concluded that in addition to the political and religious centre around Chilas and Thalpan, local Buddhist sanctuaries existed also near the confluences of the Indus with its tributaries from the side-valleys where rural communities could emerge from cultivable land. This is the case for sites at Gichi, Hodar [Hodur], Thor and Minar Gah.

A first popular introduction to the new-found rock carving province along the Karakorum Highway was published in 1981 by Dani as a guide to the main sites for the general public. It was followed by two editions in 1983 and the last enlarged version with the title "Human Records on Karakorum Highway" in 1995.[165]

In his masterly monographic study *Chilas. The City of Nanga Parvat (Dyamar)*, already in 1983 Dani summarized the results of the first three field campaigns in the Diamer District, thus presenting conspicuous insight in the manifold rock art galleries around Chilas and

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Jürgen Wasim Frembgen between 1989 and 1997 undertook ethnological studies in Indus Kohistan, especially in the Harban Valley, see: Frembgen 1999, 2008, 2013a, and 2013b. For woodworking in Kohistan, see: Frembgen 1999, 86–90 fig. 3–5. [+ Of this author, see the recent Frembgen 2022].

[163] The members of the team were A. H. Dani, V. Thewalt, T. Haubenreisser, T. Schmitt, who started anthropological studies about Goharabad (T. Schmitt, *Gor – Eine Talschaft am Indus*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Heidelberg, 1990). A photogrammetric survey of the altar rock at Thalpan and a niche-structure at Chilas II was started by H.-J. Przibylla (Bonn), and the photo-documentation was carried out by J. Poncar (Cologne). During this campaign the carvings depicting the *jātaka* of *Ṛṣipañcaka*, which was partly covered by sand, and of the Śibi Jātaka were discovered (Thewalt 1983, 623–626 and Dani 1983c, 94–95).

[164] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110.

[165] Dani 1995. The earlier editions, which are not quoted here, are: *Karakorum Highway unfolds the Romance of the Past*, Barqsons Printers, Islamabad 1979, and *Guide to Karakorum Highway*, Lok Virsa Islamabad 1983.

Thalpan.[166] This work conveyed also a first step towards reconstructing the chronology of the cultural and historical development in this region with its heyday during the Buddhist era, which can be separated into two main phases. The first stage covers a period from the 1st century BC to the close of the Kuṣāṇa (ca. 40–360 AD).[167] realm and is associated with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and characterized by a distinct expression of early Buddhist art. The second phase dating from the 5th to the 8th century is associated with inscriptions in Brāhmī, apparently derived from Gupta Brāhmī and exposing an individual form of Buddhist art. Dani emphasized the singularity of these discoveries: "The later Buddhist art of Chilas has preserved for us the late Buddhistic art trends that are not known today from Gandhara. This Buddhist art of Chilas presents us the great Buddhist art treasures of Pakistan belonging to 5th – 8th centuries AD. It contains the new Buddhist tendencies and developments that were preferred in this region". In his interpretations of the inscriptions Dani presented also insecure identifications of names with far-reaching historical connotations in some inscriptions, "which has been refused altogether: no kings, no conquest, not even a sanctuary".[168] Neither the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares (ca. 32–60 AD), nor the first Indo-Scythian 'Great King of Kings' Maues (ca. 65–75 BC), or the Great Kuṣāṇa (ca. 40–360 AD) are actually documented on the rocks along the Upper Indus.[169] The readings have meanwhile been corrected and altered by the systematic editions of all inscriptions.

For two actual royal inscriptions of considerable historical importance in Chilas, Dani and von Hinüber each offered interpretations that are not too discrepant.[170] The Proto-Śāradā inscription at Chilas Bridge 36:25, which was found by Stein in 1942, mentions Vajraśūra, apparently one of the local Dard rulers of Chilas during the first half of the 8th century AD. Another rock from Chilas-Terrace (Soniwal Payin) reveals inscriptions of king Vaiśravaasena, the second oldest great king of the Dards known by name. The earliest group of prehistoric carvings was assigned by Dani to a period of Mesolithic hunters from ca. 5000 to 3000 BC, and the latest group to the period of the Battle-Axe people occurring during the 8th century AD. Dani took part in the field surveys of the Pak-German mission only during the first three years, followed by shorter visits until 1985 in the Northern Areas.

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[166] Dani 1983a. Included in his study are the large site of Ziyarat and part of Khomar Das on the right side of the Indus, opposite Chilas. A few references are also made to Hodar, Minar Gah, and Shatial. In an earlier article, he had for the first time described prehistoric rock carvings from Chilas, Dani 1982.

[167] + The chronological bracket includes also the Kushano-Sasanian phase.

[168] Jettmar 1989c, XXXII; 19971, 56.

[169] Dani 1983a, 62, 64, 98–99, 102, 110 nos 78 and 85 connects the apparently occurrence of the name Moga Raja (Maues) at Chilas II with the name of the king with his full royal titles *Maharaya* and *Mahamita* on a copper plate inscription at Taxila (for the reading after Sten Konow: Dani 1986, 66–67, see also Dani 1985b; 2001, 127). For the so-called Gondophares Rock at Chilas I at the outlet of the Butoh Gah, see: Dani 1983a, 64 no. 46; 1995, 59; 2001, 127).

[170] Dani 1983a, 72–77 no. 56–57 and 1985b: inscription I of Vajraśūra and II of Vaiśravaṇasena are again edited with corrections in Hinüber 1989a, 57–60 no. 59a and 61 no. 62a. See also MANP 6, 2003, 54 no. 36:25 (i.e. line 1 of the inscription 36: 35–44). For a historical interpretation, see also: Jettmar 1989c, XXXVI–XXXIX. [+ See also Hinüber 1985; the revised edition of Dani 2001 is Dani 2007].

As a result of his studies in the field and on the basis of his historical researches Dani gave in 1989 the first comprehensive overview of Gilgit-Baltistan’s history from prehistorical to modern times [republished in 2001], with the title *History of the Northern Areas of Pakistan (Upto 2000 AD).* The need for such a compendium of the mountain region’s history is testified by two revised editions, printed in 2001 and 2007. As a part of the ethnological research in the Northern Areas, in 1983 and 1984 Dani undertook personally a first comprehensive survey of Islamic architectural monuments in Indus Kohistan, the Chilas District including the valleys of Darel and Tangir, in Gilgit, Nagir and Hunza. The survey of monuments in Baltistan was undertaken in cooperation with the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan conducted by Umberto Scerrato.[171] Dani’s pioneering comprehensive study *Islamic Architecture – The Wooden Style of Northern Pakistan*, which was published in 1989, presents not only an exhaustive survey of mosques, *ziyarat*s, and decorated grave coffins of the visited region, but emphasizes for the first time the differences between the characteristic wooden styles of the western part, as seen in Indus Kohistan, Swat, Dir and Chitral, and in the eastern part, as described on the basis of the rich architectural pattern of Gilgit, Hunza and particularly of Baltistan with its raja palaces, mosques and tombs, the *ziyarat*s, *khanqah*s and *astana*s (mausolea), a pattern that is mainly derived from Kashmiri craftsmanship.[172]

A first international conference on Karakorum culture was organized by Dani in September 1983 at Gilgit with the aim to draw the attention of the scientific world “on the importance of the Karakorum Highway not only for human research in this part of the world, but also to understand its historical importance as a possible route from China and Central Asia to Taxila and Gandhara and to the other parts of the subcontinent”.[173] The meeting presented a first insight into different aspects of the archaeology, ethnography and the different local languages on the basis of the new discoveries made in the widely unexplored regions of the Northern Areas during the first three campaigns of the Pak-German Study Group.

A first synopsis of the results of the research by the Pak-German Study Group between 1979 and 1984 on the rock carvings along the Karakorum Highway was presented to the public by a series of exhibitions, the first at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne in 1985, followed by other exhibitions in 1991 at Lok Virsa in Islamabad, and in 1992 at the National Museum of Pakistan in Karachi. For this occasion, a special exhibition catalogue was edited by Jettmar and Thewalt.[174] In addition to the monographs written by Dani, until today this catalogue offers the only overall presentation of the stylistic development of the rock art in the Upper Indus Valley and the attempt of its historical classification. The two editions published in German and English contributed significantly to bringing the rich imagery of the Pakistani high mountain region closer to the scientific community as well. It is noticeable that even in monographs about rock art of the Old World, the rock art province of the Upper Indus has largely not been taken into account. An overview of the more recent results of the PGAM was mediated by exhibitions at Islamabad in 1997 and 2009, and during the exhibition "Gandhara – The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan" at the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn and at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin in 2008–2009.[175]

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[171] + See Noci 2006.

[172] Dani 1989.

[173] A summary of the conference is published in *JAC* 8/2, 1985, 237–254.

[174] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987; Jettmar 1992a; Jettmar – Hauptmann 1992.

During this period of the project there had been no clear conception as to how this immense and diverse material could be systematically documented and published. Jettmar gave a first preliminary report of his discoveries in 1980 followed by studies on chronologically or stylistically differentiated groups of rock carvings. [At that time it was clear that] the inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Chinese, Tibetan and Middle Iranian should be published by the responsible linguistic members of the team in terms of separate catalogues.[176] An initial problem for this project to regain the history of the mountain region was the denial by the Pakistani authorities to include the right of necessary excavations in the official research licence. During the following decades of exploration this disadvantage would be a decisive obstacle to bringing the archaeological and iconographical materials in a chronological sequence and to discerning the changing economic developments and social organizations since early prehistory.

Sites on the northern bank of the Indus such as Khalat Das and Thor North were shown to Jettmar already in 1979, but a preliminary recording of images and inscriptions was started there in 1984 and 1985 by Thewalt, and in 1987 by von Hinüber, before the large accumulation of rock carvings and of a small settlement was finally documented by the PGAM in 1996.[177] In September 1985 Sims-Williams joined the expedition to prepare the systematic edition of 610 inscriptions in Middle-Iranian languages, of which two are in Parthian, two in Middle Persian, ca. 10 in Bactrian and the rest in Sogdian, which partly had been published earlier by Helmut Humbach on the basis of photographs.[178] The short inscriptions resemble the Sogdian graffiti in Ladakh, not only through their being inscribed on patinated boulders along a southern artery of the Silk Route from the Eastern Turkestani oases, but also in consisting almost entirely of personal names, often with the addition of a patronymic.[179] The material provides for the first time a corpus of Sogdian names "large enough to be regarded as a typical cross-section of names used by males of a particular social group".[180] Similar to Shatial, the campsite of Tangtse in Ladakh had been an important meeting place for Buddhist monks and Sogdian merchants with Tibetans during the 9th century in a much later phase than along the Upper Indus in Kohistan, where most of the Sogdian inscriptions date from the 3rd to 6th century. The discovery of the rock carving site with 565 Middle Iranian inscriptions, i.e. more than 90 % of all scripts of this type, near Shatial in 1979 turned out to be of singular importance for tracing the inclusion of the Upper Indus valley in the network of Sogdian merchants. From the trading centres in Eastern Turkestan a southern branch of the Silk Route traversed the Kilik Pass into the Hunza Valley and continued farther downstream along the Indus course, as attested by Sogdian inscriptions from Haldeikish in Hunza in the north, to Gukona, Chilas, Thor North, Oshibat and Bazeri Das as far as Shatial. The site had served for the Sogdian merchants not only as an emporium and sanctuary, but also as a bridgehead to the northwestern route leading through the Darel Valley across the Hindukush and through the Pamir or via Tokharistan and finally reaching Sogdia. This strategic position became obvious in 1987 by the discovery of a dominating stronghold on the southern bank of the Indus, now called Shatial Fort, which secured the river crossing leading to the Darel Valley and the access to the route leading to Chilas.[181]

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[175] The exhibition "The Indus – Cradle and Crossroads of Civilizations" of 1997 was also shown in Lahore: Bandini[-König] – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997. A small catalogue was also published by the National Art Gallery in Islamabad for the exhibition "Talking Rocks along the KKH, Northern Pakistan. For the exhibitions in Bonn and Berlin in 2008/2009, see: Hauptmann 2008.

[176] Jettmar 1980b,c. A first summarizing edition of the different inscriptions documented by the PGAM were started in the form of a catalogue by G. Fussman (Kharoṣṭhī), O. von Hinüber (Brāhmī), supplemented by L. Sander (1989), H. Humbach (1980a, 1985) and later N. Sims-Williams (1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1992) (Middle Iranian scripts), Chinese (Ma Yong and Th. O. Höllmann), and K. Sagaster (Tibetan) in the series ANP 1 and 2, correcting earlier readings and translations by Dani 1983a.

[177] A few inscriptions were published by Sander 1989, 119–126. M. Nasim Khan recorded the site of Khalat Das, 15 km in the west of Hodar bridge, during his surveys in 1992 and 1993. His unpublished dissertation (Nasim Khan 1995) also includes the site of Helor Das, located between Hodar [Hodur] and Thor North (Nasim Khan 1994).

In 1984 and 1985 the investigations of the Pak-German Study Group included also Baltistan, where 500 feet above the town of Shigar adjacent to Ghzwa-pa Mohallah a Buddhist hill settlement called *Skua Lung Gompa* or *Bodi Shagran* with its ruins of a monastery and five stupas was discovered. There is no other site in Baltistan with such a comparable rich cluster of 627 carvings on 147 boulders, with 45 stupa images and four representations of monks, including 72 inscriptions in Brāhmī and Tibetan. A singular metrical Brāhmi inscription was written on behalf of a pious Buddhist lord of a district, which most likely is identical with Shigar.[182]

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[178] Jettmar 1991b; 2002, 110–115. Sims-Williams 1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1992 and 2000. About one-third of the Sogdian inscriptions (no. 1–137) had been earlier published by Humbach 1980a and 1985. His readings were based solely on photographs. The majority of the Middle Iranian inscriptions, based on direct autopsy of the rocks as well on photographs, are separately edited in two volumes of the series *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (Sims-Williams 1989 and 1992).

[179] Sims-Williams 1993 and Vohra 1994.

[180] + No direct references for the quote.

[181] A first examination of the ruins was undertaken by Thewalt, who explained them as stupas based on quadrangular fundaments. Jettmar 1991b, 252; 2002, 113. A final documentation of Shatial Fort was accomplished by the PGAM in 1990, see: Bemmann – Hauptmann 1993, 321 fig. 5, pl. 21,5.

At sites called Gol on the road leading from Skardu to the Humayun Bridge in the Indus Valley, at a place near the confluence of Shyok and Indus, just across the Humayun Bridge, and at Balghar Foqnaqh opposite Fartaq between Yugo and Khaplu, rock carving clusters were recorded in 1988, showing "terraced stupas" of the so-called "cubistic style". They belong to a period of the Bolorian state before the 8th century, with unusual symbolic and floral decoration and drawings of the later 'cruciform type', reminiscent of Tibetan prototypes.[183] The team also had knowledge of other petroglyph accumulations in Baltistan, from the easternmost part of Rondu at Bacho, around the picturesque Lake Kachura to the Shyok River and Kharmang. A Brāhmī inscription from Shahi Mardan near the village of Kachura even mentions a new monastery (*saṃghārāma*), which was visited by the monk Saṃgharakṣita.[184] But there is neither epigraphic nor archaeological evidence to assume the capital of Great Palur, P'u-sa-lao or Ho-sa-lao in the area of Kachura,[185] which was captured in the year 753 by the third Chinese advance against Great P'ô-lü under Feng Ch'ang-ch'ing.

When earlier in 1982 a great number of fragmented miniature clay stupas and *ts'a ts'a,* inscribed clay seals which served as votive offerings, were said to be found at a hillock called Khalang Ranga, pasture-land in Balti, "downward about three kilometers of Skardu Bazar" near the radio station of Baltistan, Dani and Jettmar assumed the existence of stupas around Skardu. However, a visit to the place, where "a few rooms of a Buddhist monastery" had been reported, yielded no proof for such a sacral building".[186] A dating of the clay seals to the "Bolorian Kingdom" of the 7th – 8th century was possible through the script of the Brahmi inscriptions containing a Buddhist creed and comparisons of the stamped impression of the stupa with carved types from the late Buddhist period in the Diamer District or Kashmir.

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[182] The site was discovered in 1984 by Syed M. Abbas Qazmi, who informed Adam Nayyar, then scientific director of Lok Virsa, the National Institute of Folk Heritage in Islamabad. Jettmar with his team recorded ca. 25 inscriptions at this hillock in September 1984. Again in 1985 he together with D. Faccenna and M. Taddei of the Italian Archaeological Mission visited the place to discuss a possible excavation project there: Jettmar 1987c, 38–42; 1989b, 184–187 fig. 72; 1989e, 204–207; 1990b, 803–808 fig. 2–7; 1992a, pl. 34–36; 2002, 184–187 (1989c, 205–207 fig. 122–123). For the metrical Brāhmī inscription, see Hinüber 1989a, 66–68. For photos of some of the rock carvings, see: Schuh 2011, 531–538. The site was systematically surveyed by the PGAM between 1998 and 2000. A C14 sample from a robber's ditch dug into the room of an architectural structure on the plateau is dated between 350 and 550 AD.

[183] The rock carving site of Gol was noticed by Jettmar during his first visit in Baltistan in 1955. The prominent rock of Balghar Foqnaqh with the striking stupa images and swastika motif and the rock carving site of Yugo was visited by him together with M. Arif for the first time in 1988: Jettmar 1989b, 184–185 fig. 72; 1990b, 808 figs 8–9. For the rock of Balghar Foqnaqh, see also: Arif 1992, pl. 3. For a list of archaeological sites, see Arif 2000. The sites since their discovery and subsequent visits were finally documented by the PGAM in 2009. [+ In general, with reference to the actual architecture of stupas, the reader should first consider Fussman – Murad – Ollivier 2008, and Faccenna – Spagnesi 2014].

[184] Hinüber 1989b, 74, no. 68a. In 2007 ruins of a monastery have been located by PGAM above the village Ghazi Abad above the Kachura Lake close to a place called Kar Fong with a huge rock bearing Buddhist carving.

[185] Tucci 1977, 84. Jettmar 2002, 129–130 saw his identification with Katsura as "realistic".

The need for an urgent exploration of the historical heritage in Baltistan was at last demanded by Jettmar after these discoveries, which were enriched by two other monuments. An until then unknown relief depicting a Buddha triad was found in 1982 in the south of the village of Lamsah (Mohallah), just above the Shigar River,[187] marking the ascent from the Shigar Plain across the pathway leading to the plain of Skardu. And it was again Syed Muhammad Abbas Qazmi, who in 1987 acquired a long and flat slab with two lines of a Tibetan inscription referring to the "rebuilding" of a stupa. The stone was reused as a bridge for crossing the "Gangoopi Channel" near Skardu, which is said to have been constructed at the beginning of the 17th century.[188]

In 1988 a group of Buddhist rock carvings was discovered above the important Indus River crossing, Partab Bridge, the first bridge constructed by the British.[189] During the same journey the valleys of Gilgit River with its subsidiaries Ghizer and Yasin were visited and several rock art sites recorded.[190] Between Gupis and Pingal Jettmar observed five assemblages of petroglyphs mainly on promontories above the Ghizer River. The images display animals and hunting scenes of the "timeless art of hunters and herdsmen",[191] but no explicit Buddhist motifs. Solar rosettes and battle axes along the Upper Indus as noted at a place called Thangai represent the post-Buddhist period. The large rock carving sites of Murkha and near Noh Village on both sides of the Yasin River with multi-figured compositions of game, hunting scenes, sometimes with the hunter himself, present an iconography which is totally different from the imagery in Diamer District. Relations to the Pamir rock art prompted Jettmar to speak of a "Pamir-Gilgit Complex".[192] This assignment is yet another argument for including the whole rock imagery of the Northern Areas in a much broader complex of rock art covering an area from the Upper Indus in the south, through mountainous semi-desert and steppe regions of Central Asia and as far as South Siberia in the north. During all periods the images reflect interrelations which transferred new ideas, religious beliefs and political influences between the different rock carving provinces.

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[186] The inscribed clay seals with their stamped impression representing three types were published by Mian Said Qamar: see Qamar 1990 (see also Qamar 1985). Jettmar 1989b and 2002. The hillock near the radio station at Skardu was visited by Dani and Hauptmann in 1982.

[187] The boulder with the relief was recorded by Dani and Hauptmann in 1982 (see Jettmar 1990b, 810 fig. 10) and finally documented by the PGAM in 2007. The Tourism Department of Gilgit-Baltistan in 2010 secured the rock with an enclosure wall, but deepened the ancient surface of the pathway so that the relief is hardly discernible for visitors. The rock is 5.70 m high and 6.00 m wide.

[188] The inscription was found by Syed M. Abbas Qazmi in March 1987 on the Gangoopi Channel "which was constructed by Mendoq-rGualmo (Gul Khatoon), the Mughal queen of Ali Sher Khan Anchan around 1600–1610". The slab is now kept on his private estate at Skardu. A translation of the Tibetan inscription is owed to Roland Bielmeier. See Jettmar 1989b, 187.

[189] Jettmar 1995.

[190] Jettmar 1989b, 187–190. The huge prehistoric rock art site of Murkha on the left side of Yasin River was noted by M. Arif in 1988. Ardito Desio recorded rock carving sites along the Ghizer River (Thangai, Shamran, Pingal, see Desio 1985, 237–240 pl. 3–7), in Yasin Valley between Gupis and Yasin (Desio 1985, 240–242 pl. 8–10), and in Hunza (Desio 1985, 242–245 pl. 11–16). The depicted huge hunting scenes from Yasin Valley mainly refer to a non-Buddhist population in this region.

[191] + No direct references for the quote.

Jettmar did not view the megalithic "stone-circles" as graves, one of which near the village Chachi at the confluence of Yasin and Ghizer had been mentioned as a "sepulchral mound" by Biddulph in 1880 and was described by Tom George Longstaff, in view of its perfect circle of megaliths as "miniature Stonehenge".[193] Such stone circles are widespread over a large territory from Yasin to Ishkoman. Jettmar's report could be confirmed during later observations that in the gravel filling of the stone circles (4 to 5 m in diameter and up to 1 m high), which had been dismantled by villagers of Yasin, large bones of apparently cows, sheep or goats were found, but no remains of any human burials orgrave-goods.[194] He connected these monuments with platforms known as *thali*s, used as memorials for living persons, who were allowed to sit on a raised platform receiving praise and congratulations from the community. Before the ceremony, the relatives and followers had to build the platform during what we may call a "feast of merit". Many animals were slaughtered and eaten during such practices, the bones were mixed with the earth and gravel".

Since 1984 the project was incorporated as a research unit in the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, with the aim of processing the previously collected material, to supplement it by further expeditions of the "Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas of Pakistan" (PGAM), and to publish the rock carving sites successively and systematically.[195] In 1989 the directorship of the research project was passed over to Harald Hauptmann. With the generous support of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Karachi, whose headquarter was transferred in 2005 to Islamabad, the project could be established as an example of international and interdisciplinary co-operation with scholars from England, France and Pakistan. Studies on different subjects such as geomorphology, zoology or the traditional vernacular architecture and especially epigraphical researches are included.[196] Important progress in the knowledge of the until then obscure history of the Trans-Himalayan belt was achieved in 1989 again by Dani, then the Nestor of archaeology and ancient history in Pakistan, with his condense reconstruction of the *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan (Upto 2000 AD*). This work, as already stated, was again published in a revised edition in 2001 and followed by two reprints, based on his own studies from 1979 to 1985 as a member of the Pak-German Team of Anthropological Research. With this publication Dani showed that the Northern Areas, which culturally and historically had been connected with Chitral until its partition by the British in 1895, no longer could be seen as “an appendix to Kashmir”, but had “its own independent historical development”.

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[192] The site of Murkha was discovered by M. Arif: Jettmar 1989a, 190; 1993a, VII–VIII. Ulrich Hallier is owed a first presentation of this remarkable rock carving accumulation: Hallier 1991 and Hallier – Hallier 2010.

[193] Biddulph 1880, 57–58. Longstaff 1920–1921, 159.

[194] Jettmar 1967a, 75 fig. 19; 1989b, 187–188. See also Jettmar 1975, 229–230, 235.

[195] Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997. Final publications in the series H. Hauptmann (ed.), Materials for the Archaeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan (Mainz) (= MANP). See also Nasim Khan 2000.

Another focus of the field work was the topographical survey of the most important ancient sites and routes in the Upper Indus valley. With the help of exact mapping by the team of the Institute for Geodesy at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the former University of Karlsruhe (TH), the distribution of the stylistic and local variations of the rupestrian art in these regions becomes obvious. When interpreted in connection with the rich epigraphical material, different spheres of power and political influence become more evident. Moreover, the recording of archaeological remains, such as the ancient routes, river crossings, resting places, forts, settlements, sanctuaries and cemeteries will shed further light on the still very little known cultural history of this region connecting Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistani lowlands along a side branch of the “Silk Road”. These petroglyphs and inscriptions are far more than mere incidental graffiti, a “visitors’ day-book” or the “visitor’s book of the Silk Road” engraved by local farmers, hunters and shepherds, and by invaders, merchants, pilgrims or travelling monks, or even artists employed by the local political establishment. They provide information about the cultural and ethnic variety and changes of religions and local beliefs in this region from pre-Islamic times back into prehistory, even to the Early Holocene or Late Stone Age, i.e. the 9th – 8th millennium BC.

Rock images featuring stupas, Buddha with his adorants, Bodhisattvas, a few jātaka scenes and other compositions reveal a great variety of stylistic trends. The masterpieces indicate artists of exceptional elegance and sophistication, particularly around the sites of Chilas and Thalpan singular in this region.

The valleys of the upper Gilgit River and its subsidiaries Ishkoman, Ghizer and Yasin had been partly surveyed also by Jettmar in 1988. Even earlier in 1986 Ulrich Hallier gained first insight into the rich rock art galleries of the Yasin Valley, also of the extended site Murkha on the left bank of the Yasin River. During the PGAM survey of 2011 only 1087 rock images were recorded. The western bank in the south of Noh revealed more than 515 images. Contrary to the canon of the imagery in the Upper Indus region, the rock art of Yasin and Ghizer is characterized by wild game as the main topic of rock art, sometimes arranged with hunters using slings and in a later period “sophisticated reflex bows”, thus reflecting the world of a society, whose survival was dependent upon hunting. They display a great variety of mainly prehistoric hunting scenes in a characteristic expressive style, which resembles the imagery of the Central Asian rock art connected with tribes living in the Pamir.[197] A panel from the Yasin Valley shows images of the *rubab*, a musical instrument played by Sufis during their religious ceremonies.[198] This particular rock carving represents a singular and early testimony of a mystical Islamic tradition, which was probably introduced by Muslim missionaries along the main connection between the Pamirs and Gilgit during or after the 16th century.

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[196] Currently published in: *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies* 1, 1989 – 5, 2004 (= ANP). The fortified village of Sazin in Indus Kohistan was surveyed by Peter Alford Andrews in 1987 and published in ANP 4.

In 1991 Haruko Tsuchiya of the Sophia University Kamakura initiated a project to trace the ancient route that Faxian (Fa Hsien), a Chinese pilgrim of the (Eastern) Dong Jin Dynasty, one of the kingdoms of the Six Dynasties Period 399–415 AD, followed in the high-mountain region on his travel from Chang'an to Tashqurgan to Gandhara and North India. During the series of her field research, especially in the valleys of the Gilgit River and its subsidiaries Ishkoman, Yasin and Ghizer as well as in the Singal Valley over the Batakhun and Pataro Pass to the Darel Valley, she reported a large number of rock carving sites, which partly had been surveyed earlier. But there obviously has been no systematic documentation of any rock carving site in the Ghizer District. In 2010 and 2011 a systematical survey of the large rock carving assemblages on both sides of the Yasin River has revealed more than 76 stones at Murkha and also stones with images of mainly prehistoric origin. The conspicuous absence of Buddhist testimonies in Yasin confirms the assumption that the northernmost valleys were not inhabited by a Buddhist population. [199]

For the reconstruction of the Holocene history of climate, vegetation and the earliest human influence in the Northern Areas there exist far too few palynological investigations. A series of profiles are available from a swamp south of the Fairy Meadows (3300 m) in the Raikot Valley north of Nanga Parbat and from the Yasin Valley.[200] They enable insight in the increase of precipitation in the early Holocene, which promoted the growth of pine forest. Since 5000 B.P. the lower summer monsoon precipitation led to the Artemisia steppe with some Juniperus-forests. But there are no clear indications for human influence in the early prehistoric periods to be discerned.

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[197] For the surveys of Jettmar and by the PGAM, see: Jettmar 1967a; 1989b, 187–190 pl. 26–28; 1993a, VII–VIII. Hallier 1991 and 2010. For critical remarks about Hallier's survey see: Jettmar 1993b, 97; 2001, 137–138.

[198] The carving, discovered by Jettmar in 1988, shows almost no repatination and belongs to a post-Buddhist stratum of rock art. Jettmar 1989, 188–189 pl. 27; 1993b, 97; 2001, 106–107, 137 fig. 20.

[199] [+ With reference to Yasin, in the previous sentence, after "Yasin confirms" HH left a side annotation: "Jettmar 2002, 138"]. Tsuchiya 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006. For rock carvings: Tsuchiya 1998a, 127 fig. 4; 1998b, 60 pl. 4–8; 1999, 370–371 fig. 10; 2000, 897–900 fig. 7–10; 2006, 103. Rock art sites mainly showing ibexes and hunting scenes have been observed in other basins north of Gilgit such as in the Chapursan Valley, a tributary of the Hunza River (northern Karakorum): Iturrizaga 2008, 38 photo 46.

[200] Schlütz 1999, 105–118.

7 Rock Art in Other Regions of Pakistan

Rock carving assemblages have been found in other regions along the middle course of the Indus River as well, where complexes of rock formations suitable for practising rock art were available. Cuthbert King, the Deputy Commissioner of Attok, first recorded in 1931 the existence of rock drawings on the west bank of the Indus River below the Attock Bridge. The same assemblages were revisited by D.H. Gordon, who published engravings from the three localities, Mandori and Gandab downstream from the Attock Bridge, and from Ghariala near the junction of the Haro River with the Indus.[201] At Mandori he noticed also two inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī. During the Yale-Cambridge Expedition of 1935 H. de Terra and T.T. Paterson again documented boulders with rock carvings along the Indus near Attok.[202] They show two stylistic assemblages: an earlier group with human and animal figures and a later prehistoric group showing elephants, Bactrian camels, a humped bull, and horsemen. Noteworthy are images showing a bullock cart and a solar disc.

Numerous rock engravings were found in the Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP or KPK), previously called the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).[203] A series of rock carving sites along the ancient route leading from Dir across the Lowari Pass via Chitral to the Broghal Pass and in the Chitral Valley were recorded by M. Nasim Khan during a survey of the Peshawar University. A typical larger site is located on the slopes of the Occhur Mountain at Jondhak near Chitral, comprising simple pictures of ibex, markhor, human figures, hunting scenes and horsemen.[204] To an earlier prehistoric period belong a group of petroglyphs at the road leading from Mastuj Village to Baroghil Pass, showing foot- and handprints. A first reference to the existence of Buddhist rock images and Brāhmī inscriptions in Chitral is owed to Stein. Such carvings including the images of a stupa with a Brāhmī inscription were again recorded in 1988 by Nasim Khan on a boulder in the Charan Village and on another boulder in Torkoh Valley near the village of Rain. Both inscriptions denominate the name of the same king from the 4th – 5th century AD: "A pious gift of the Raja Jīvavarma", showing the importance of this route through the Hindukush range into the Wakhan corridor. The concurrent style of writing of both inscriptions are evidently the work of one hand. A ten lines inscription in Śāradā dating to 8th to 10th century at last was found near Arandu on the bank of the Kunar River in Lower Chitral Valley.[205]

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[201] King 1940.

[202] de Terra 1940, 206–207 figs 74–75, the carvings are also mentioned and dated to late Eneolithic by P. Teilhard de Chardin 1958, 214. Gordon 1960, 111–112.

[203] Rehman 1997. Ashraf Khan. – Bahadur Khan – Azeem 1999–2000. Mohammadzai 2005; Mohammadzai – Khan 2011.

[204] Nasim Khan 2002b.

[205] The Brāhmī inscription of Kalandar-i-Bohtni at Torkoh in Mastuj sub-division of Chitral was discovered by M. Nawaz Khan in 1994 (Frontier Post 5.11.1994) and documented together with the (already known?) inscription from Charan during the Chitral-Survey of the Peshawar University in

The Swat Valley represents yet another important province of rock art. Giuseppe Tucci found in Gogdara of the same simple style in 1955–1956 (Tucci 1958), while a completely new rock art panorama was discovered in the same valley during the last years.[206]

Rock carvings of the same simple design are known from Hathiano Kandano at the foot of the Mura Hills in the Palai Valley, Malakand Agency.[207] They depict images of bulls, dogs, many horses, scenes of galloping horses accompanied by a horseman, and human figures. The imagery reveals a lifestyle of advanced nomadism with horse-breeding.

An almost unknown rich rock-art province in the mountain region is between Sindh and Balochistan; it has been systematically surveyed since 2005 by Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro. [208] Carvings from a long space of time from early prehistory to the Islamic period are engraved on rock faces, boulders, but also in rock shelters and caves [near Sehwan as well as] in the valleys of the Khirtar Mountain Range in Sindh.[209] The Buddhist period is represented by a large number of images of stupas of three different types and inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī, which bear witness to the importance of the valleys, locally called *nains* (hill torrents), through the Khirtar Range as routes for traders and pilgrims leading from Sindh to Balochistan and beyond to Iran.[210] The graffiti reflect also the predominance of Buddhism in this region. The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who travelled through the kingdom of Sin-tu before the Arab conquest noted "several hundred monasteries *(saṅghārāma)* occupied by about 10,000 priests", who studied the Hīnayāna Buddhism, the Little Vehicle, the belief in more than one Buddha, according to the Sammitīya school.[211] The rock carvings from the Seeta Valley, 80 km from the city of Lakarna, date over a long period of time as well, from the

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1998: Nasim Khan 2002b, 180 (without photo). A carving of a stupa and an accompanying Brāhmī inscription with the name of its donor 'Rāja Jaīvavarman' was found by Stein in 1899 near 'Charrun' and may therefore correspond to that of Charan: Stein 1912, 42, 44–45 and 1921, 37 fig. 5–6. See also: Hallier 1991, 4 fig.3. – For the inscription in Śāradā from Arandu, see: Nasim Khan 2002b, 180 fig. 5. The Brāhmī inscription of Barensis, 43 km north of Chitral and 1 km away from Rain, dated to the 9th century, is mentioned by Afzal Khan 1975, 12. Rock carving sites from Parwak in Chitral with simple images of animals, anthropomorphs and hunting scenes are reported by Khan 2013.

[206] + Henceforth HH leaves some bibliographic information in the text. For example here: Tucci 1958. I thought it was correct to leave them as they are. They make clear the very last revision of the text done by HH. On the rock art of Swat, see Olivieri et al. 1996 (on Nokkono Ghwand etc.), Olivieri 1998 (on Gogdara I), Vidale – Olivieri 2002, Olivieri – Vidale 2004, Vidale – Olivieri 2005, Olivieri, Vidale et al. 2006, Olivieri 2015a. Amongst the Pakistani scholars who wrote on the Swat rock art, see the production by Badshah Sardar (2005, 2007, 2010).

[207] Nazir Khan 1983.

[208] + The same author has recently published new reports (e.g. Kalhoro 2018: on Sindh; Kalhoro 2021: on Balochistan).

[209] Rock carvings at Dalh in Nain Naing in Sehwan tehsil, Sindh, were first mentioned by Majmuder 1935. Kalhoro 2009, 2011, 2013a. Abro 2011.

[210] Kalhoro 2009, 102–103, 105–106; 2011, 309–310; 2013a.

[211] Beal 1884, II 272.

Epi-Palaeolithic to the Islamic period, including Buddhist images of stupas.[212] In Balochistan an assemblage of rock carvings and inscriptions was surveyed by the DoAM in 1984 on the hillock Tor-Derai in Loralai District.[213] Human figures and horses are depicted isolated or composed in scenes with horsemen, sometimes the warrior standing on a horse. Human figures are accompanied by Hinduistic symbols such as swastika and triśulā, the standard attribute of Lord Śiva. Together with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī they might be attributable to the early first millennium AD. Carvings of horsemen yielding axes and swords, apparently involved in battle scenes, are found also in Punjab on rock faces of the Chiniot Hills. As in the other rock art provinces the images might belong to a much later period than the Bronze Age.[214] As in other regions of Pakistan there are also rock paintings in Sindh, at Lahaut in the Maher Valley, Gadap Tehsil of Karachi District. The assignment of the earliest paintings to the Mesolithic period is not secured by associated archaeological artifacts.[215]

The dating of the petroglyphs is made possible by assessing different stages of the desert varnish,[216] by palimpsests, i.e. superimposed carvings thus revealing their chronological sequence, by analysing the technique of engraving and, last but not least, by stylistic comparisons with rock art provinces, where comparable images are archaeologically dated. Basing on the different patinations and weatherings, the geologist Helmut de Terra tried to discern four major groups in the rock pictures of Ladakh.[217] For the painted and carved rock art in India, attempts have been made to define different stylistic groups and to place them in a chronological system.[218] Some carvings of the Buddhist period are accompanied by inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Bactrian, Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian, presenting yet another source for historical information. There are 13 isolated inscriptions in Chinese,[219] also in Tibetan, mainly in Baltistan,[220] and even one in Hebrew in Gichi. Many different themes, topics, and styles could be identified in these carvings, in which the range of the region's history is reflected. More than eight different main stages in the stylistic development can be distinguished, as summarized in the following paragraphs.

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[212] Kalhoro 2012 and 2014c.

[213] Qamar 1986.

[214] Mughal 1999.

[215] Kalhoro 2014a.

[216] The term 'desert varnish' *(Wüstenlack)* is defined in: Biedermann 1976, 143–144 and Garvie – Burt – Buseck 2008.

[217] de Terra 1940, 48.

[218] Brooks – Wakankar 1976.

[219] Yong 1986 [repr. 1989]. Höllmann 1993 and 1996. For a newly found inscription, see: Chilas VI 16:131.

[220] Chilas VI 16:56.61.71.

III The Rock Art of the Upper Indus

1 The Prehistory

1.1 Early hunters and gatherers in the Upper Indus Valley [Tables 5.1–7.2]

The most ancient group of rock carvings is characterized by its varnish-like patina, which is identical to that of the darkly coloured rock and thus allowing the attribution to an earlier prehistoric age. The imagery of this group displays a remarkable uniformity in its subject matter, including above all pictures of wild animals and very few hunting scenes. The spatial organisation of the earliest drawings is characterized by compositions, which are generally limited to the juxtaposition of a few animals. They seem rather to be conceived as individual figures, which can be orientated in different directions. Few creations convey evident hunting scenes with the hunter himself. These engravings constitute only ca. five percent of the entire material. In the drawings "on the contour" performed in so-called sub-naturalistic style, wild ungulate animals like ibexes (Himalayan or Asiatic ibex – *Capra ibex sibirica* or Persian wild goat – *Capra aegagrus*) are most frequent, followed by markhor *(Capra falconeri)*, the giant wild caprid with magnificent spiralling horns, blue sheep or bharal *(Pseudois nayaur)*, and red deer *(Cervus elaphus)*. Predators are stylised as in other provinces of rock art in Central Asia and Near East, which can be dated to the 9th or 8th millennium, i.e. from the Late Stone Age to the Epi palaeolithic or Neolithic period.[1]

Still in dispute is since which period the early hunters intruded into the mountain region, namely because the last major phase of glaciation in the western Himalayas lasted until 10,000 years ago. Artifacts of the Early, Lower and Middle Palaeolithic found in the piedmont of the Himalayas and Hindukush, such as in Jammu, Kashmir and the Kandak area in Middle Swat, clearly demonstrate that the lower and medium altitudes of the high mountain regions did not represent a barrier to early mankind.[2] Early humans in the Ladakh Trans-Himalayan region along the Upper Indus River, the Leh Valley and around Kargil in Ladakh are evidenced by Early Palaeolithic tools of the Early Soan type and by bifacial stone tools and other pebble artifacts of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic.[3] Yet until now there is no reliable archaeological and palaeo-environmental evidence for the presence of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer groups in the higher altitudes of the Northern Areas. These regions seem to have been inaccessible, because the early Holocene large glaciers blocked the Indus Valley, also around the Nanga Parbat as far as Shatial, and caused large lakes.

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[1] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 12; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 36.52–53 no. 8–10; MANP 5, 25–26.

[2] Sharma 2000, 33–43. Micheli 2006.

[3] Sharma 2000, 39–41. Ganjoo – Ota 2012.

With the onset of the Holocene, from ca. 9000 BC, there was a pronounced warming and moistening of climate in High Asia, after which the tree cover extended also to the high mountain regions. After the retreat of the glaciers, and especially between the sixth and third millennium BC, a more dense vegetation emerged in the valleys and also an increase of pine woods on the mountain sides, due to a more balanced and humid climate.[4] An enhanced precipitation prevailed likewise during the early Holocene of Central Asia (9500–6200 BC), as is evident from Lake Panggong sediments in the Karakorum Range of Ladakh.[5] These favourable environmental conditions with a rich variety of wild animals attracted groups of hunter-gatherers. Eventually, yet not before the beginning of the Bronze Age, i.e. the third millennium BC, the landscape gradually transformed into the present dominant dry Artemisia steppe with an increase of open juniper forests, as a result of the much drier climate and lower precipitation.[6] From palynological analysis of a peat sequence in the Yasin area it is evident that since the second millennium BC animal husbandry was practiced in the pasture land. This record would at least indicate the existence of a larger sedentary population.[7]

Since the very beginning of human occupation and for the next subsequent millennia the occupation along the Upper Indus and its main tributaries such as the Gilgit or Yasin, the population groups must have come from regions nearby. Regarding the most ancient images of wild animals in the Yasin Valley, the earliest occupants apparently moved across the high Karakorum passes from the West Central Asian steppes. In view of the great diversity of different ethnic and disparate spoken languages, the subsequent groups that entered the mountain valleys came also from diverse homelands, from the southern lowlands and Kashmir.

There are three different category groups of prehistoric carvings, related by the same stylistic technical features and motifs: Drawings "on the contour" with carefully grooved outlines of the animal figures are most common in the earliest rock art along the Upper Indus. The same archaic form of realism in the representation of wild animals such as bulls or aurochs and also hunting scenes is found in several rock carving provinces in Central Asia,

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[4] For palynological investigations on the Holocene history of climate and vegetation in the swamps of Fairy Meadows in the Raikot Valley north of Nanga Parbat and in Yasin, see: Schlütz 1999, 116–117, 121. "The vegetation history (after the Fairy Meadows profile) proves the strengthening of summer monsoon at the beginning of middle Holocene at 7200 B.P. A decrease of the summer monsoon took place in ca. 5000 B.P. A further climatic deterioration started at the beginning of the younger Holocene (2700 B.P.)" (op. cit. 124).

[5] Brown et al. 2003.

[6] Schlütz 1998, 149–150; 1999, 117–118.

[7] + Other recent data on the palaeoclimatic variations of the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions can be found in Micheli 2006 (with refs.), van Geel [Geel van] et al. 2004, Esper et al. 2006, Treydte et al. 2006, Büntgen et al. 2016, Callegaro et al. 2018, Giosan et al. 2018, Spate 2019, Olivieri 2020.

Siberia, and the Caucasus.[8] The most ancient group of animal carvings at Kalgutinsky Rudnik (Kalgoot mine) on the Ukok Plateau in the southern Altai, which is situated in the Russian Altai Republic, according to Vyacheslav I. Molodin and Jacob A. Sher, resembles the earliest drawings in "Minusinsk tradition" in the Minusinsk Basin, in the Arshan Had sanctuary, along the Tsagaan-Salaa River in Mongolia, on the Shishkin Rocks, at the site of Hadza Udzur, and at last in Beyuk-Dash in the Gobustan Caves of Azerbaijan. A date for the Kalgoot group to the Upper Palaeolithic period has been proposed both in view of the existence of palaeolithic sites in the neighbourhood and by stylistic relations with the resembling rock carving assemblages.[9] The design of the archaic animal carvings from the Upper Indus reveals a striking elegance that diverges from the more unbalanced imagery of the sites in Central Asia and Siberia.[10] There are obvious stylistic similarities to painted animals of the earliest naturalistic group in India, which is dated to the Upper Palaeolithic period.[11] The figures are drawn in outline or silhouette, in dark tan, purple and green colour, and depict only herbivorous animals like elephants, antilopes, bisons and boars. Animal figures are also the predominant feature in the Mesolithic paintings of the rock shelters Bhimbetka in Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh.[12] The paintings comprise a wide range of herbivorous animals, game and beasts of prey as evidence of the local fauna, but also hunting scenes and human figures. The imagery of the Mesolithic period, Bhimbetka III b, which is also attested by cultural layers, represents the climatic change with increasing humidity after the beginning of the Holocene period, which resulted in the growth of vegetation and forests and in the increase of population. It shows also the diversity of an environment that differed from the mountain regions.

Engraved images of bovids and other animals even from the remote upper Nile Valley represent through their naturalistically drawn style the nearest equivalents to the Upper Indus. Two locations of remarkable rock art from Qurta and Abu Tanqura Bahari at el-Hosh in Upper Egypt have been attributed to the Upper Palaeolithic. The assignment to a period in time of ca. 17,000 to 15,000 BC has been obtained through OSL dating, but it is also based on the association of the petroglyphs with settlement sites of this age. The figurative Pleistocene rock art of Qurta and other Egyptian sites, displaying the earliest pre-Holocene rupestrial imagery of North Africa, would therefore be contemporaneous with Solutrean-Early Magdalenian art in Western Europe.[13] As regards the absence of agricultural and pastoral scenes and the obvious stylistic affinities with Late Magdalenian rupestrial art of the Franco-Cantabrian zone, the earliest carvings from the Upper Indus have been assigned to a time between the Late Stone Age, the Epipalaeolithic and the Mesolithic periods.

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[8] Altai: Molodin – Cheremesin 1999, figs 48, 49, 69, 70. – "Second style", Kjanica at Beyuk Dash (Ovchular Cave) in Gobistan, Azerbaijan: Rüstəmov 1991, fig. 14–18. Rüstamov 1994, fig. 4, 6, 8. Kšica – Kšicova 1994, 59–67 fig. B59e, i.

[9] Molodin – Cheremesin 1999, 158.

[10] + Here HH used the German term "*unausgewogen*" (unbalanced).

[11] Pandey 1993, 149, 187 pl. 5; about the dating of the Upper Palaeolithic see p. 198–200.

[12] Pandey 1993, 78–79, 177–179. Badam – Sathe 1996. Studies about Bhimbetka has condensed Chakraverty 2003, 28–33.

[13] The sites are attributed to the Ballanan-Silsilian culture in the Kom Ombo plain, 14,000–13,000 BC: Huyge et al. 2007, Huyge 2008. For the OSL dating, see: Huyge et al. 2011.

The compact representation of the body with its belt-like division is characteristic of the second category, which has also parallels in the early rock art of the Near East, Caucasus, and Central Asia. In some images the body is designed in bi-concave outline, which is normally characteristic of a later stage. Carvings of aurochs and ibexes with the characteristic belt-like line on the body are known from the abris at Şonqardağ in Qobistan in Azerbaijan, dated to the Mesolithic period.[14] Images of bovids and mountain goats depicted in the same style in two clusters of carvings at Kahn-ı Melikân and Tahtı Melik Mevkii (Throne of the King) on the Tirişin Plateau in the Southeast Anatolian province Hakkâri have been dated to a pre-pottery Neolithic period, also through obsidian artifacts from surface finds (9th – 8th millennium BC).[15] Some of the engravings there are reminiscent of an Early Neolithic relief in Göbekli Tepe showing a bovid with the head drawn in frontal view. But the varied imagery of the mountain site of Göbekli Tepe near Urfa in Upper Mesopotamia is substantially different from Late Palaeolithic art and displays in some reliefs a remarkable narrative content.[16] Assigned to the Upper Palaeolithic is the large painted image of a bison from the Central Indian rock shelter no. 10 from Adamgarh, Hoshangabad district of the Bhopal region. The painting belongs to the second phase of at least ten superimpositions in the shelter. The figure, which is singular in Indian rock art, due to its drawing in a red double outline and its head in frontal view, resembles Central and Near Eastern animal representations of this style.[17]

In the third category the interior body of animal figures is filled in with bruising by abrading the patina and grinding the deepened surface. Animals executed with a narrow, wasp-waist represent another group of a more abstract "bi-concave or bi-triangular style". They are depicted individually side by side or arranged in hunting scenes. The representation of a male figure with raised arms standing near an animal or behind it, shooting with a bow, and accompanied by a dog occurs only in a few examples (Dadam Das 48:T). Depicted in the same scene is a handprint, a symbol in whose significance a special ritual and person is inherent. The diminution of his figure to hand- or footprints are more frequent and represent a universal symbol among rock art throughout all continents and periods. The prints of hands and feet may symbolize the presence of men, by representing personal marks, but their meaning is still recondite. The phenomenon of depicting hand stencils is known from the Upper Palaeolithic in Franco-Cantabrian cave art with the highest number during the Gravettian, in the "Sanctuary of Hands" of the Gargas Cave in Haute Pyrénées and in the Grotte Cosquer, Bouches-du Rhône, in the Provence.[18] A total of 55 examples is located in the east side of the cave, one in the west, thus indicating the presence of persons belonging to both sexes and all ages who visited the place. The purpose of hand stencilling there has frequently been explained as evidence of ritual performances, such as initiation ceremonies at puberty, but this hypothesis was abandoned after even two baby hands were recognized. The aim of hand-depicting was to catch some of the supernatural power believed to reside within the rock or, in the case of the handprints on the rocks displaying carved hunting scenes, to gain access to the supernatural world represented by the game. Once depicted, proof of the hunter's manual as well as mental contact with the supernatural world remained, forever immortalized on the rock.

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[14] The dating of the carvings at Şonqardağ is based on lithics found during excavations at Şonqardağ: Rüstəmov 1991, fig. 20. Rüstəmov – Muradova 2003, 13 pl. 10–13. Belt-like lines on the body of animal images at Cingirdağ – Yazılıtəpə ub Qobustan are a common stylistic feature: Nuriyev (ed.) 2016, 20–21, 24–25, 32–33, 58–59, 64–65, 66–67 with figs.

[15] Uyanık 1974, 34ff. fig. 12.57–61.65–71.144:11.13.146:4.5. Alok 1988, 38–40, 42–43. For the surface finds of flint and obsidian, see: B. Howe apud Uyanık 1974, 54–57; Özdoğan 1999, 234 pl. 198, 3.4. 199, 7; Özdoğan 2004, 28 fig. 2–3. For comparisons of the Göbekli relief with Near Eastern rock art, see: Schmidt 2000, 4.

[16] Compare Uyanık 1974, fig. 58–61.65.66.146:4.5.10 and Hauptmann 1999, 79 pl. 50, fig. 22. Bovids depicted in the same style and with the head drawn in frontal view are known from the 'Animal's Farm' at Jawa in Jordan (Hunt 1976, 28 fig. 19). For similar images in North and Northwest Saudi Arabia, and Al Mosal Haqat in North Yemen (Nayeem 2000, 44 fig. 1–2; 455, fig. 1; 457 fig. 7–8. Khan 2007, 107–118 fig. 80–89) dates to the Neolithic period have been assumed.

[17] Pandey 1993, 55, 149, 187, pl. 5 and 71.

Handprints are sometimes arranged in pairs or in groups joined by lines. There are many other connotations, but they are evidence for and symbols of manual contact with the spiritual world of an upper or lower realm. As for the hand prints and hand stencils, which occur since the earliest phases of Franco-Cantabrian cave art dating back to the Aurignacien and Gravettien, arranged also in pairs, they could also be defined as expressions of warding off evil, as it seems obvious in Upper Palaeolithic cave art. The rupestrial art of this stage clearly expresses the Stone Age hunter's view of his natural environment, upon which he was so closely dependent.[19]

In rare cases, there are also representations of birds. A similar ratio of the main sujets occurs in the Franco-Cantabrian art. Images of animals represent with 62 % the majority, different signs or symbols with 34 %, and men only 4 %.[20]

The depiction of goats is a widespread motif in rock art, from early prehistory until recent times. Goats, particularly the male animal, among the Kalash of Chitral and also the Dards in the Gilgit area are conceived as the most sacred animals, which were sacrificed by the herdsmen exclusively for male deities. Together with the markhor and also the snow leopard, goats are considered to be the embodiment of the pure ritual sphere of the fairies in the high pastures of the mountains.[21] The hunter therefore had to win the fairy's benevolence by performing special sacrifices so as to secure successful game-hunting.

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[18] Lorblanchet 1997, 109–110, 219, 272.

[19] In the painted rock shelters of Bhimbetka hand prints appear for the first time in period 1 (so-called Mesolithic period, which is dated around 8000 BC): Badam – Sathe 1996, 25–27.

[20] Lorblanchet 1997, 57.

[21] Parkes 1987, 645–649. See also still recently living traditions in Kohistan: Frembgen 2013, 97.

1.2 The late prehistory

Early depictions of animals in the Upper Indus, in the majority showing ibexes, and sometimes of humans in the "bi-triangular principle", seem to be characteristic of a later prehistoric period (Thakot 22:2). The body is outlined in the characteristic bi-concave shape, whereas the geometric bi-triangular shape seems to be rendered also in later images of animals but also of humans, such as hunters. They occur in many sites along the Upper Indus River and compose lively hunting scenes, such as in Thor North [Table 10.1] and in the Gilgit Valley.[22]

In Yasin animals and hunting compositions in manifold contexts are the major theme in rock art. The animals are shown in dynamic (vibrant) moving poses, their backs curved (??) and their legs bent (?) as if in motion, stampeding away from chasing dogs. The hunter wears a round object, perhaps representing a bag, club or even a catapult. With their distinct form of expression, the petroglyphs of Murkha and Nor on the rocky cliffs and boulders towering above both banks of the Yasin form a separate branch of prehistoric rock art, which has no exact parallels in the lower part of the Upper Indus region. Scenes with the same stylistic traits showing hunting scenes are known from Murgi Tokpo in the Nubra Valley and in other sites such as Dargo in the ʻBrog Area and Bazga Zampo in Ladakh, which have been dated to the Bronze Age I.[23] Among them there are archers with the same rounded-edge object at the waist. The path of the arrows is again indicated.[24] Contrary to the animals with a narrow waist, the geometric bi-triangular forms obviously occur also during later phases of the Bronze and Iron Age.[25] The sandclock-like body consists of two triangles joint by their points in the middle of the trunk.

Figures of this characteristic form with their narrow waist are amply attested in other sites too, such as Hatiano Kandao in Mardan and at Tor Derai in Swat and at Tapalkan in Bajaur.[26] Similar Central Asian animal carvings there have been viewed as parallels by A.N. Bernshtam and N.Ja. Šer in motifs of the painted ceramics of the ʻObēd culture, Susa I- and even of the Namazga III-period dating to the 4th and early 3rd millennium BC.

A pair of monumental oxen in this particular style, pulling a carriage, is depicted on a wall painting in the Late Chalcolithic palatial area in the remote site of Arslantepe near Malatya in Eastern Central Anatolia (Level VI A, 3350–3000 BC).[27] In Sajmaly-Taš, one of the largest rock carving sites of Central Asia, located at an altitude of 3200 m asl. in the Fergana Mountain Range in Kyrgyzstan, belongs to the earliest group of petroglyphs, the "pre-Saka style".[28] The rock images on ca. 5000 stones date mainly to the Bronze Age (2400–900 BC). Nonetheless, these comparisons are not conclusive for restricting the "bi-triangular style" to a certain period, as M.K. Kadȳrbaev and A.N. Mar'yashev emphasized for the rock carvings at Karatau in South Kazakhstan.[29] The striking similarities between the early rock art of the mountains and of Central Asia persist throughout all prehistoric periods, which can be explained also by the fact that access to the mountain valleys between the Karakorum in the north and the western Himalayas was easier from the northern side. Such permanent infiltrations of hunter-gatherer groups from the north, in contrast to Kashmir (Burzahom) and Swat (Aligrama), have not been attested until now by other archaeological materials from the Upper Indus region.

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[22] [+ Thor North:] Dani 1983a, 24; Jettmar 1985, 755 fig. 3. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 12 pl. 1. Khomar Das 50:10, 50:14 (outlined). The markhor of bi-concave shape in an animal hunt scene at Dardarbati Das 43:A. [+ Gilgit Valley:] Upper Gakuch village: Hallier 1991, 13 fig. 30. Tsuchiya 1998b, 60 pl. 7.

[23] Dargo: Vohra 2005b, 18. Bazga Zampo: Bruneau – Devers – Vernier 2011, 93–97 fig. 5–6, 12.

[24] + HH left a side note: "(see Aldy Mozag: Dévlet 1999, 603 fig. 4,17–22, 33–35)".

[25] Jettmar 1982b, 298 fig. 1.

[26] Swat: Olivieri 1998, 25. Alingar in Bajaur: Rehman 1997, 35 pl. 14a. Issik Valley–East, Wakhan, Afghanistan: Grazl 1978, 330 photo 82.

[27] Frangipane 2004, fig. 64.

The earliest, still isolated evidence of human presence in the neighbouring Swat Valley is owed to Giorgio Stacul's excavation in the rock shelter of Ghalegai on the left bank of the River. The earliest phase (layers 24–21) of four settlement phases there was ascribed to ca. 3000–2500 BC, when the (late) "Neolithic" way of life spread from the peripheral zones of the Indus Valley into the northern mountain regions.[30]

The site of Burzahom, 16 km northeast of Srinagar, represents a village with two Neolithic occupation phases, the Early Neolithic phase I, 2500–2000 BC and the Late Neolithic phase II, 2000–1500 BC. The economy of the inhabitants was based on agriculture, the breeding of cattle and fowl, but also on hunting. In the final phase the keeping also of domestic sheep, goats and pigs is attested. The appearance of northern Neolithic food-producing communities in Kashmir, such as in Burzahom and Gufkral in the Kashmir Vale and Aligrama and Loebanr in Swat, which are "foreign to Indian tradition", are apparently related to Central Asia during the Okunev Culture.[31]

A final interpretation of the concentrations of petroglyphs as being sites for religious or ceremonial procedures is still not possible, since there have been no other archaeological findings such as stone artifacts that can be connected with these carvings. Dani mentioned microlithic tools of quartz from the sites around Chilas as evidence for "Mesolithic hunters".[32]

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[28] Šer 1980, 205. Bernshtam 1997, 397. Christoph Baumer undertook in 2017/2018 the overdue systematic documentation of the site.[+ HH left a side note: "Lit. ergänzen Gefäßmalerei s. Olivieri-Sardar.", with reference to the publications of the two scholars].

[29] Kadȳrbaev – Mar'yashev 1977, 156–158.

[30] Excavations of 1967–1968 and 1987 provided evidence of four almost uninterrupted occupation horizons in Swat Valley (Period I: 3000–2500 B.C, Period II: 2400–1900 BC, Period III: 1900–1700 BC, Period IV: 1700–1400 BC): Stacul 1967, 1969, 1987. Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri 2011, 94–101 [+ HH left a side note: "Stacul in Possehl SA Studies, 114" = Stacul 1992].

[31] Allchin – Allchin 1997; Allchin – Chakrabarti eds 1997, 105. The Northern Neolithic of the Northern border region of the Indus is summarized by Possehl – Rissman 1992, I 479–481; Ray 1970, 33–34; Possehl 1999, 542–553. See also Jettmar 2002, 95.

[32] Supposed microlithic tools from Chilas VII at the mouth of Gichi Gah: Dani 1983a, 16–18 (cited also by Mughal 1985, 214–215, and Salim 1986, 34; 1998, 290). Since these artefacts have not been adequately published, they cannot be interpreted as a proof for the presence of "Mesolithic hunters"

However, until now there is "no reliable evidence" for any Epipalaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic stone industries such as the mentioned points, scrapers, and triangles from this region.[33] On sand dunes that cover parts of the terraces above the Upper Indus there are widespread scattered fragments of quartz near quartz veins, which may have led to their misinterpretation as prehistoric tools. It is well known that also in Swat neither flint nor chert artifacts occur, due to the long distance from the sources of this important raw material for the production of special tools.[34]

We know from other rock art centres in Siberia, South Africa or Australia that there was a long cultural continuity, which might help to explain the mythic and spiritual contents of the petroglyphs. Therefore, one can nevertheless conjecture that some of the rock assemblages with petroglyphs may have served as ritual centres for clans or tribal communities. The rock art galleries of the Tamgaly canyon in the southeastern part of the Chu-Ili Mountains in South Kazakhstan furnish clear evidence for a cult zone with a centre mediating mythological and transcendental contents.[35] The rocks of the canyon with their dramatically formed outlines and their homogeneous glossy-black patina mark the space of a sanctuary where ritual ceremonies were held. This open air cult zone with the significant divine figures and a necropolis is clearly separated from settlement areas located in the mountains. The relationship between both areas is confirmed by their dating to the Middle and Late Bronze Age, the second half of the second millennium BC. In Siberian ethnography prominent cliffs were generally worshipped as the dwellings of totemic divinities, where ceremonies and festivals took place. Stone sanctuaries, known as "*dev*'s boulders", existed also in remote high-mountain valleys around Gilgit, where until recent times local rituals took place.[36] Naturalistic images of animals such as those in the Ice Age cave art of the Franco-Cantabrian style in Western Europe are mostly related to magic practices of hunters attempting to cast a spell on the hunted animal and to secure its preservation and multiplication, thus securing the hunters continent source of food – a ritual which could also apply to some of the carvings in the Northern Areas. Through portraying the hunted animals they seem to control them.

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dating "around 6000 to 3000 B.C." Salim 1998, 290–291 fig. 1–2 even reports on Neolithic pebble tools found in 1995 in Chilas-Jayachand near the Thalpan Bridge. Dani 1983b, 45 even claimed to have observed "pit dwellings" at Ziyarat opposite of Chilas, which he compared with similar subterranean architectural features at Burzahom in Kashmir. The Early Neolithic phase IA (Gufkral IB) there dates to the late third millennium BC (Kaw 1979 and Possehl 1999, 548).

[33] Jettmar 2002, 91.

[34] + Tools in Prehistoric Swat were made of local stones: see Stacul 1987, Micheli 2006.

[35] Rogozhinsky 2011, 209–211.

[36] Stellrecht [Müller-Stellrecht] 1980, 62–64. The *dev* or dē·ū (Sanskrit *dēva*) "of todays is a shadowy and illusive being scarcely to be isolated from the group of Jinn", Lorimer 1929, 517. According Willson 1999, 171–172 "a *deéu* is a giant creature, similar to a *phút-bilás*, but stronger" and dwells in rainbows. The phút-bilás is regarded as a feminine evil spirit.

There are rare representations of the hunter himself, sometimes equipped with a simple bow. The diminution of his figure to hand- or footprints are now more frequent than in the first stage symbolizing the presence of the hunter.[37] The hand- and footprints are proof of hunter's mental contact with the supernatural world. Handprints are sometimes arranged in pairs or in groups joined by lines. They can also be defined as expressions of warding off evil, as seems obvious in Upper Palaeolithic cave art.

2 North and Central Asian Influence in the Bronze Age

2.1 Masks of shamans and hunters [Table 9.2]

The second significant group of carvings includes mask-like images or anthropomorphic faces. They are known from the Upper Indus valley from sites such as Darel Nala, around Chilas, Thalpan, Thak Nala, Ziyarat and Thakot. Their distribution along the upper course of the River is attested as far as Ladakh, with sites such as Murgi in Nubra being the northernmost extension of this region. Jettmar linked these maskoids to similar motifs in the rock art of the Early Bronze Age belonging to the Siberian Okunev Culture in the middle Enisej Valley, i.e. in Chakassian and in the Minusinsk Basin as far as northern Tuva in East Siberia.[38] This characteristic feature is spread from the Gegam Mountains in Armenia to the mouth of the Amur River far in the east, and it occurs also in Mongolia and Hindukush. Vladimir D. Kubarev emphasized connections to the Altai, where he saw analogies in other motifs between the Upper Indus and rock carvings at Kalbak Taš, Jalbak Taš and Ater Kaj at the confluence of the main rivers Katun and Čuja.[39]

The obvious similarities could also be due to direct population movements across the Karakorum to the south during the Bronze Age. The Okunev Culture is attributed by radiocarbon dating to the end of the third and the beginning of the second millennium BC.[40] In Central and Northern Asia numerous human masks represent a significant feature of rock art. In Mugur-Sargol more than 250 masks and in the Sajan canyon at Aldy Mozag in Tuva more than 40 were noted and assigned by M.-A. Dévlet to eight different groups.[41] Images of masks resembling an owl face on the Javkhlant Khairkhan Mountain and on the Noyon Mountain in Mongolia seem to depict Xiongnu shaman hats adorned by owl feathers around the hat edges.[42] Feathers of this nocturnal bird belong to the shaman's apparel, thus showing the role that the owl played in shamanism. Masks are known from Mongolian Altai Tsagaan Salaa in west Mongolia, too.[43]

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[37] Hunting scenes with handprints in Wakhan: Grazl 1978, 315 fig. 1c; 320, 338–339 fig. 18–19.

[38] Jettmar 1982a; 1982b, 300 pl. 1; 2002, 92. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 12 pl. 2. Dani 1983a, fig. 22.

[39] Kubarev 2001, 129 [+ Here HH left this annotation: "*(Schreibungen prüfen)*"].

[40] Sher 1980, 216–225 fig. 112–116; Kšica – Kšicova 1994, 156–157; Dévlet 1999, 600–602 fig. 4, 1–16. Leont'ev – Kapel'ko 2002; Novozhenov 2002, 44 fig. 9. 11, 1–11; Dévlet 2004, figs 15, 16,1.3–16. Parzinger 2006, 306. A mask on a reused stone slab in Aržan 2: Čugunov – Parzinger – Nagler 2010, 138 fig. 117, 2.

[41] Dévlet 1980, 1998, 1999, 600–602 fig. 4, 1–16.

The masks or maskoids of the Upper Indus show a face diagonally subdivided into four segments.[44] Two of them are alternatively shaded by bruising; dots indicating eyes and vertical lines on the head may represent hair, horns or even rays; in one drawing from Ziyarat the head is crowned by a tuft [Table 9.2]. The characteristic addition of an "antenna" on the parting represents a common feature of masks of the Mugur Sargol-type, which are numerous in sites such as Aldy Mozag.[45] It could be speculated that the meaning of these images was related to shamanistic rituals, or that they even depict the mask or head-gear of shamans. This interpretation is maintained by the picture from Aldy-Mozaga in South Siberia showing a shaman holding two masks.[46] Therefore masks sometimes have a handle, as depicted in the rock carving site of Mugur-Sargol in South Siberia.[47] Strikingly, most of the mask images at Aldy Mozag are carved in the rocks facing the River Enisej, similar to the situation along the Upper Indus.

Carved face masks have been noted as well in Sindh, in the rock carvings site of the Gaj Valley in Johi tahsil in Dardu District. The images are drawn much cruder, and the face is divided by a cross into four segments.[48]

Face masks with lines running upwards and anthropomorphic figures with heads surrounded by rays are carved on menhir-like stelae in the middle Enisej Valley in the Charkassian-Minusinsk Basin. These images of the Okunev Culture (beginning in the 3rd millennium BC) have been interpreted by Leonid R. Kyzlasov, who assigned this group to a separate Tazmin Culture, as representations of a sun- or light-god.[49] Such divinities worshipped by natives of Siberia, for example, the Jakutes and the Ketes, were seen as helpers of the shamans. In the imagination of the Ketes the sun-god sends – along with the rays of the dawn – the souls of the still unborn to the earth. Petroglyphs from Kangjia Shimenzi near Quergou in Hutubi District on the northern side of the Tien Shan in Xinjiang reveailed also anthropomorphic masks showing all details of the human face, some of them wearing two antenna-like rays on top of the head. They are included in an "erotic dance scene", in which smaller dancers and copulating couples are arranged around a central two-headed human figure. This spectacular composition is unparalleled in Central Asian rock art both by virtue of its design and its expression. It is dated to the beginning of the second millennium BC.[50]

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[42] Tseveendorj – Tserendagva – Gunchinsuren 2007, 15–20.

[43] + HH left a side note: "(Jacobson – Kubarev – Tseveendorj 2006 see Repertoire 7.1, 481; 7.2, 256)" = Jacobson-Tepfer – Kubarev – Tseveendorj 2006. On a rare example of maskoid from Swat, see Olivieri – Minardi –Vidale 2022.

[44] Four different types of maskoid from Murgi Tokpo in the Nubra Valley and in Zanskar, Ladakh: Francfort – Klodzinski – Mascle 1990, 8 fig. 5; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 52–53 no. 1–3; Francfort 2003, 199–200 fig. 200; Vernier 2007, 66–67 fig. III.36, 37. Vohra 2005a, 4. Bruneau 2012, 70–74 fig. 3–6.

[45] Dévlet 1999, 602 fig. 4, 15–16.

[46] Dévlet 2004, 30 fig. 14, 3.

[47] Dévlet 1980. Francfort 1998, 312 fig. 17.9.

[48] Kind information by Zulfikar Ali Kalhoro, Islamabad.

[49] Kyzlasov 1990, 70–71 pl. 47,6; 54, 1–4.8. Leont'ev – Kapel'ko 2002, 33–34 no. 32 (Černoe ozero), 174 (Ulus Onchakov).

A strongly sensed cultural continuity rooted in an early prehistoric stage are the magic hunting practices of the Harappan period. This phenomenon is the portrayal of human figures wearing horned animal masks, engraved on copper platelets from Mohenjo Daro.[51] Yet, the depicting of face masks cannot necessarily be taken for granted as representing shamans.[52]

Since this prehistoric period hunters seem to have worn masks, perhaps simply to deceive wild game. This is testified by carvings of the so-called type "horned anthropomorphic creatures" (Ziyarat 55:1; Khomar Das 50:12, 52:1. 62:6. Dardarbati Das 27:5). The hunter wearing a mask that ends in two horns is also part of a hunting scene (Ziyarat 102:A; Thakot 101:A). Horned masks ending with two or only one horn, possibly symbolizing a markhor, are characteristic of anthropomorphic figures and / or real hunter images (Ziyarat 114:A, 140:2; Thakot 101:3,4, Mostar Nala 31:2, 90:1, 106:1). Even today in the Northern Areas, the guise of a fox, made of cloth, is used in hunting the chakor.[53] According to local legend, the birds made a contract with the fox, that once a year on a certain day the fox was permitted to chase one of them. Thereafter, the birds need not to fear the fox; so the hunter disguised as a fox would have easy play.

Hunters wearing the guise of an animal are also a common feature in the rock art of Central Asia. From Ak-Kaynar, Kuljabasy and Tamgaly in South Kazakhstan rare drawings of an archer with the mask of a wolf or snow leopard are known which are dated to the Middle Bronze Age.[54] Masked figures associated with scenes of dancing humans occur in the rock carving panels in the Seeta Valley in Sindh. They are assigned to the Bronze Age, but show no direct resemblance with masks of the Okunev culture.[55] In the painted rock art of India 'stick-shaped' human figures are shown wearing animal masks with horns, particularly of bisons.[56] They could represent magicians who held a vital position among hunter groups.

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[50] Francfort 1994, 47 fig. 17. Baumer 2012, 134–135 prefers a later date between 1250–1000 BC [+ Chen 1990].

[51] Caspers 1989.

[52] + Here should have started a paragraph, left uncompleted, which started with the following words: "The emergence of shamanism… ." This reference could be connected to a second annotation left by HH in the bibliography, which mentions Jettmar 1972a.

[53] Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 48–49 fig. 4.

[54] Kuljabasy: Sala – Deom 2005, 55 fig. 4.4. Tamgaly: Kšica 1966, 58 pl. 39,4. Rogozhinsky 2011, 181, 185 figs 146, 150.

[55] Kalhoro 2012, 366–370 figs 3, 11, 22–23 and 2014c, 256–257 fig. 15.10, 15:11. A tentative interpretation of the masked figures as local deities or tribal chiefs is pretended.

[56] Third stage of the 'Mesolithic': Pandey 1993, 202 pl. 43; 230 pl. 3, 1–5.

The masked man could also try to adopt the personality of the game to deceive the animals, so that it becomes an easy prey for the hunter.

The fantastic image of an otherworldly being with spread but hanging arms and the lower part of the triangular body ending in the shape of a crescent connects the mask motifes with a further exceptional group of anthropomorphic figures. This figure wears a mask-like headdress or crown with the quadrangular face part subdivided by diagonals with four dots in the centre and crowned by radiating hairs standing to end. The shaded arms end in large hands. An equivalent decoration of the headdress shows a singular image of a mask at Ziyarat (Ziyarat 114:7). This singular figure from Ziyarat has been interpreted by Dani as a river or even as a snake god, because a snake rises from its left arm.[57] Another exceptional image of a supernatural male being with raised arms and stilted fingers is crowned by a tall mask-like headdress ending in four blossom-like points (Thakot 68:10). This figure is 64 cm high. In view of its inferior size and different execution, it belongs to the large group of so-called demons rather than to the group of peculiar representations of giants.

2.2 Images of giants – mythic figures [Tables 7.2–9.2]

The significant feature of this Bronze Age group are the more than 60 representations of a so-called "giant", "giant *dēva*", or "world's giant" (*Weltriese* after Jettmar). Entailed here are frontal male anthropomorphic figures with outstretched arms ending in exaggerated hands and splayed legs, representing a particularly impressive motif in rock art.[58] Most of the figures are depicted in human life-size at prominent and isolated places above the Indus River, in an area extending from the mouth of the Darel Valley to Ba Das. There are clusters of these strange giants, for example, the twelve figures in Rudir and Khanbari [Table 8.1–2] to the west on rocks high above the torrent of the Indus River, which forms an S-loop there. Five such images mark the access to another site at Kino Kor Das, where altogether ten giant images were observed. Again six examples are known from Dadam Das (i.e. Dardarbati Das), six or seven from Oshibat, and 10 from Ziyarat. Some of these naked male figures are more than two metres high. Details of the face are never executed; the heads show raised hair strings like flames and include the indication of ears. Sometimes these figures occur in the neighbourhood of imprints of human hands and feet, or they are associated by pictures of snakes, but never together with other figures and symbols. Handprints are present on the breast of the figure at Ba Das (Ba Das 39:5–6), and on the arms of the double giant at Thor North.

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[57] Jettmar 1982b, 302 fig. 3; 2002, 92–93 assigned the "river god" to the cultural background of the Okunev culture, in contrast to his much later dating of other giant images. A first description is owed to Dani 1983a, 34 no. 34. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 12 pl. 3. MANP 10, no. 62:1.

[58] Jettmar 1982b, 300–302 pl. 2; 1984a, 198–200 fig. 10; 1989b, 182, Dani 1983a, 24 no. 32. Jettmar 1996[a], 91 saw a connection of the giant images with popular beliefs as the images of Abu Jahal, the arch-enemy of the Prophet, or mere pagan deities. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 36–37 fig. 1; 52–53 no. 6. Jettmar 2002, 92–93 fig. 14 and 17. In detail: Oshibat: MANP 1, 1994, 12 no. 18:128, 150; 52:1; 80:1; 86:1; 88:1.2. Dadam Das: MANP 5, 2005, 14–20 pl. 7–8 no. 78:1, 81:2; 85:1; 95:1. Ziyarat: MANP 10, 2011, no. 10:A, 61:30, 62:1, 100:12, 107:1, 115:4. 206:A, 207:1. Ba Das: MANP 11, 2013, 35–36 no. 39, 5–6, 39:A.

Concerning the dating of these remarkable giant figures to a prehistoric period, scholars have not been always in accordance. Jettmar even suggested a dating to the Buddhist period, without regarding the difference of patina between images of prehistoric and Buddhist periods. All carvings show the same dark patina and the same archaic style that corresponds to that of Central Asian demon figures. The obvious isolated location, on one hand, and the vicinity of hand- and footprints of clearly prehistoric age, on the other hand, reveal the spiritual concept of a remote period of time.

In Ziyarat the giant figures are depicted in pairs on two rock faces (Ziyarat 10:A, 206:A). A pair of these images occurs on a rock at Oshibat. The torso of the larger figure bears a decoration of two vertical rows of triangles, which could be explained as being a cloth or a reproduction of the skeleton (Oshibat 18:128). Such combinations are of particular symbolic significance in Khanbari West. The male figure with extended arms is accompanied by another smaller figure in frontal posture, resembling a mummy or a “shroud” in its outline rather than an anthropomorphic creature. Here again both ears and a few vertical hair strings extend from the otherwise bald head, but again no details of the face are depicted. The upper armless body seems to be dressed by a narrow coat and the legs are not separated. In Khanbari there are also isolated figures of the same contour, which may represent the female counterpart of the main figure or perhaps a corpse.[59]

An elaborate drawing of a giant on the top surface of a large boulder at Chilas VI attracted particular attention because of the breasts which had been added later and fetters binding the large feet together [Table 9.1].[60] The later additions – the breasts, the fetters and the phallus – are contrasting, not only through their lighter colouring of the patination, but also through their coarse execution. The female attributes and the fettering have been interpreted as an effort to prevent or diminish the power of the malevolent mythical figure. But, the added phallus might even insinuate bisexuality of the figure, revealing the disparagement of the giant’s original power. Here again the giant figure is accompanied by hand- and footprints.

Similar giants were found at eighteen sites along the Upper Indus River in Ladakh.[61] There such images are known from Samrah, in the Dah Hanu Valley near Leh, two examples from rocks near the Indus at the bridge near Stakna ca. 30 km east of Leh, one pair in the Baldez hamlet in the Purig area on the left bank of the Indus, and another image at Dachi Zampa. The homogenous depiction of both types, the figure with spread or raised arms and the 'shroud', and their proscribed limitation to the cliffs and boulders along the Indus in both areas suggest an equivalent origin and interpretation. As in the lower part of the Upper Indus the figure of the giant never occurs in the direct neighbourhood of the masks. In this sort of representation, the faces are apparently related to the aforementioned anthropomorphic masks, which are characteristic for the Bronze Age Okunev Culture in the third millennium BC.

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[59] A “shroud” is also depicted on the banks of the Indus near the Dard village Dha at Khanutse in Ladakh: Albinia 2008, 271–273 fig. 33. Bruneau 2012, 74–76 fig. 8–9.

[60] Dani 1988, 98 fig. 22; 1995, 39 with fig. p. 47 emphasized the archaic style of the figure being “a concept of prehistoric period”. – Jettmar 1982b, 300 pl. 2; 1984a, 198–200 fig. 10; 1992b, 24 fig. 3; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 24 pl. 22. in contrast considered a dating to the Buddhist period. Even in his last publication, Jettmar 2002, fig. 14, stuck to the dating to the Buddhist period.

[61] Bemmann – Hauptmann 1993, 315 fig. 2. According to the information by B. S. Hansen the giant on the left bank of the Sangeluma Chu, 1.5 km near Samrah, was destroyed during road construction in 1995. Baldez: Vohra 2005a, 26. Bruneau 2012, 74–77.

Surprisingly, these large anthropomorphic figures with outstretched or raised arms are found even in as remote an area as the Subarnarekha Valley in the state of Jharkhand of Eastern India.[62] Engraved in the surface of a huge boulder at the village Maubhandar near Ghatsila, a town in the Singbhum District, is a group of six giant figures.

The giants of the Indus region have been connected with similar representations in Central Asia, China, Mongolia and Siberia. Such images of "masked big men" are engraved and painted on gravestone slabs in the Early Bronze Age cemetery of Karakol' in Tuva in the High Altai, dated to the early second millennium BC.[63] In contrast to these images such outsized monsters with spread or raised arms and marked male sexual characteristics occur in Eškiol'mes in South Kazakhstan always at the centre of a battle scene. They are attacked by much smaller archers, apparently fighting against demons.[64] Within Altai rock art sites of Western Mongolia strange images of "otherworldly figures" are included, which are dated between the pre-Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age. The frontal figures referring "to the spirit world rather than to human or shamanic power" are bell-shaped and the horned heads lack facial features.[65] In the aforementioned singular composition on a rock at Kangjia Shimenzi in Ximgjian arranged around a central human figure with two heads are several smaller persons, apparently in dancing and erotic poses, and also several masks. The faces and masks show all details of a human face, and some of them have the significant antenna-like rays on their heads. The scene which obviously reflects fertility ceremonies has been connected with similar representations known from the Okunev Culture and giant figures of the Upper Indus.

A group of engraved standing human figures found at Phatakalat beyond the Upper Gakuch on the way to the Kani Pass and at Nasurabad near Imit shows some similarities with the giant figures, also measuring more than 70 cm in size.[66] In their design they differ from other anthropomorphic images in the Gilgit Valley. The male figures are also depicted in frontal pose with raised arms and phallus, but with bent knees in profile they seem to symbolize ritual dance. In contrast to that of the giants, the interior of the body is filled in with bruising.

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[62] Mitra 1927, 201 pl. 12–15 assumes a date in Neolithic period. See also Chakraverty 2003, 35–36 fig. 10. A similar anthropomorphic figure from a painted rock shelter of the Iron Age (?) at Isco in the Karanpura Valley: Chakraverty 1995, 82 fig. 5 and 2003, 36 fig. 35.

[63] Kubarev 1988, 60 fig 44; 62 fig. 46. Leont'ev – Kapel'ko 2000, 33 fig. 12. Parzinger 2006, 299.

[64] Mariyashev – Goryachev [Gorjačev] – Potapov 1998, 18 pl. 52 no. 106–107. Bairakov – Maryashev [Mar'jačev] – Potapov – Goryachev 2005, 80 figs 9 and 11.

[65] Tsagaan Salaa-Baga Oigor and Bayan Ölgiy: Jacobson-Tepfer – Meacam 2010, 48 no. 3.32.

[66] Tsuchiya 2000, 898 figs 8–9. For a photo of the carving, see: Albinia 2008, 240 fig. 27.

The question still remains as to what the enigmatic giant figures of the Upper Indus valley are supposed to represent. Their origin and significance remain unclear. Their appearance on isolated rock faces along the Upper Indus indicates an elaboration of belief and ritual during the Bronze Age. Perhaps they portray ancestors or even demons, mountain spirits or local deities, which held an important place in the magic rituals of these cattle-breeding nomads of the Bronze Age. As they are engraved in clusters on rocks only along the Indus River, another interpretation could be that they represent the god of the torrent itself. The above-mentioned figure of the so-called river- or snake-god at Ziyarat (62:1) which links the maskoids and the giants might support this interpretation, since it is also connected with the picture of a snake. In a mountain region that is both nourished but also endangered by a dominant river, folk tales attest an ancient cult of the Indus which is also known along the lower course of the river in Sindh.

A riverine cult is found in the worship of Uderolāl, who is perceived by Sindhi Hindus as an incarnation of Varuṇa, as the Vedic god of waters.[67] Two river goddesses adorn reliefs flanking the entrance to the Śiva temple at Ahicchattrā in Uttar Pradesh, dated to the 5th – 6th century AD: Gaṅgā personifying the Ganges with her theriomorphic symbol and *vāhana* (“vehicle”), a crocodilian monster *(makara)*, and Yamunā *(Jāmuna)* symbolising the river of the same name with her *vāhana*, the tortoise. Their precursors dating to the Gupta period (401 AD) appear with rock-cut figures standing atop the same symbolic animals on the doorway of cave 6 at Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh.[68] The veneration of river divinities so characteristic of later Hinduism is also known from tribal beliefs in Central Asia.[69] There springs and fountains are connected with a female ghost or nymph and with rivers which rise from glaciers with a male god. This bisexual principle is true also for religious conceptions in the classical and the ancient Iranian world.[70]

The giant images have also been explained as a malevolent demon living within and beneath the gorges, when lying under the earth only the head and shoulders visible. With his movements he provokes the frequent earthquakes in this mountain region or he conveys other evils to the humans.[71] According to another folk-tale the ithyphallic male figure is regarded as an image of Abu Jahal, the demonised opponent of Prophet Muhammad.[72] Abu Jahal, Abū

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[67] [+ HH added here this side note: “*Lit. suchen (Sindh)*”]: Kincaid 1925, ch.2. Burton 1973 (1851) 326–334. Carter 1917, Thakur 1959, 19–21, 123–134, Ajwani 1970, 19–42.

[68] Huntington 1985, 189, fig. 10.4 and 215 fig. 10.37.

[69] Litvinski 2003, 37–38.

[70] + Here HH left – introduced by a question mark – this unelaborated side note: “(?) This dogma finds its connotation of the female [water] element with the name of Ahura Mazdā and of the male water with Mazdā of Zoroaster, similar to the Indian Varuṇa as the creator of water”.

[71] Jettmar 1992b, 24 and 1997a, 66 fig. 4.

[72] Jettmar 1996[a], 91.

Ǧahl i.e. the ‘father of ignorance’, is the epithet of the historic ‘Amr b. Hišām b. al-Mughīra of the Banū clan, which belonged to the Quraīš, the tribe of Muhammad. The powerful Mughīra family was among Muhammad’s most obstinate opponents in Mekka. Abū Ǧahl at last died in the battle of Badr on 19 March 614 AD against the followers of the Prophet. Jettmar saw in this assignment to Abu Jahal as reference to a pagan deity or demon from pre-Buddhist times, an opponent to Buddhist beliefs and now against the expansion of Islam.[73] His interpretation is based on the assumption that the images had been produced during the Buddhist period. He includes also so-called giant images of the post-Buddhist time in that ideological interrelation between Buddhism and new religious movements. Leitner mentions a Dardu demon of gigantic size, having only one eye, which is on the forehead. The demon is called *Yatch*, appearing only during darkness; he ruled the mountains and oppose the cultivation of the land by men. Even after the adoption of Islam they occasionally menace believers.[74] Lorimer recorded the legend of the *Hirbilás*, a one eyed male demon living in caves in Hunza: “There is said to be one in Shishpar nullah. He has one eye and looks up towards the sky, not towards the ground”. Similar to Cyclops in Homer’s Odyssee he is said to eat also men.[75] The mythical world of the mountaineers is populated by fairies and giants, as described in the “Festivals and Folklore of Gilgit” by Ghulam Muhammad. In the legend of the lunar eclipse one of them called *Grahn* “is a lover of the moon. On the 14th of the lunar months, when the moon is in its full beauty, the Grahn, whenever he pleases, catches hold of the moon”. And in the legend of the solar eclipse “the Gilgit people say that whenever any good king dies or is banished from his country, the giant Grahn becomes angry against the sun, and darkens a whole of a part of his (the sun’s) face as a sign of grief for the death or the banishment of such a good king”. Giants called *Yaths* also played a part in the creation of the world, which was first enveloped in water.[76] In Northern Kafiristan the pre-Islamic pantheon knows malevolent demons, called *Yush* (female *Yushtrig*), who are described as having great strength and gigantic size. The top of his head reaches into the heavens, and the earth trembles under his footsteps. His handprint on a rock shows six fingers.[77] According to another description the male *Yush* “are red in colour”, “having long horns, feet turned back, and being covered by hair”. They stay in low lying rocky places and gorges”.[78] The vernacular tradition of the Pashai, who inhabited the lower foothills of the Hindukush to the south of Nuristan in Eastern Afghanistan, tell about colossal saints called “chechel-gazi-baba”, “forty cubits tall fathers”.[79]

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[73] Jettmar 1992b, 26.

[74] Leitner 1893, 1–2.

[75] Lorimer 1935–1938: III 81. Stellrecht (unpublished manuscript) refers also to a more modern version of the *Hirbilás*-legend. See also Willson 1999, 173.

[76] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 107–108. Jettmar 1975, 88, 214, 444–445 connects the Dardic giant *Grahn (Grahan)* with the Hindu demon *Rāhu*, who swallows moon and sun.

[77] Robertson 1896, 413–414. Jettmar 1975, 61–65, 74, 78, 156, 172–173. Jettmar 1986, 42–44.

[78] Klimburg 1999, 157.

[79] + Similar folktales and personal experiences are reported amongst the Afridi (Olivieri pers. comm.).

These giants live on below ground and contribute from there to the benefit of fertility of the fields and of mankind.[80]

Nonetheless, the giant figures may simply depict shamans, known as *dayal* in Shina-speaking regions around Gilgit and as his counterpart *biṭán* in the Burushaski-speaking Hunza and Yasin.[81] The same word appears also in Khowar of Chitral, the region west of Yasin. The usual male dayal in the state of trance establishes by mediation of benevolent fairies, the *peri* or *barai*, and protective ghosts, the *rachi*, a linkage between the human world and the supernatural sphere. To attain the trance, he has to inhale the smoke of burning leaves of juniper, which is imperative in different ritual procedures. A sacred animal, the goat, is slaughtered and the shaman drinks its blood. In a ritual dance he contacts the peris, who are attracted by the hymns of the participants and the smoke of the juniper twigs. He has acquired supernatural power to transfer the soul of the high-ranking deceased into the realm of spirits or ghosts.

The images were presumably created at places associated also with ritual events, symbolizing both the event itself and the mythical figure bound with it. In the above mentioned enigmatic figure at Chilas VI, later additions of breasts and a fetter binding the feet together seem to transform the obviously maleficent figure into a more benevolent female being.[82] The head of another giant was transformed into a solar disc, a characteristic symbol of the "sun-worshippers" during the post-Buddhist period of the battle-axe people.[83] Altogether, these shamanistic concepts, which are still alive in the beliefs and customs of the region, are apparently derived from Central Asian or South Siberian prototypes, and they may indicate a movement of northern nomadic groups into the Indus Valley. Together with the masks they express a shamanistic type of religion during this period.[84]

Comparable to the interpretation of the giant figures as shamans, other human individuals bear the epithet 'giant', the 'giant king', as well. The Pelliot Tibetan manuscript PT 1283 from

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[80] Wutt 1981, 98. About the ethnicity of the Pashai, see: p. 15–16.

[81] Willson 1999, 164–165. In his study the spirit world of the Hunza region is summarized, op. cit. 170–189.

[82] Dani 1983a, 24 pl. 11. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 24 pl. 22. Jettmar 1997a, 66 fig. 4, 2.

[83] Jettmar 1997a, 66 fig. 3.

[84] Shamanistic procedures were still practised until the second half of the last century in remote high-mountain valleys by the *daiyal (dayal)*, "superhumanly endowed human beings", who are of both sexes and any class: Biddulph 1880, 96–98, Leitner 1893, 7–8. Lorimer 1929, 534–536. Willson 1999, 165 refers to *biṭáns*, who can be male or female, "but are frequently women". "There are only few *biṭáyo* in Hunza; one is known to live in Garelt and another in Altit". Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 103–104 saw in 1893 a dance by a *Danyal* woman at Gilgit. When men and women called *Danyals* "are worked up into a state of frenzy the giants and fairies instruct them concerning the forture of the country, the chiefs". – Diviners have been recently observed especially in Broqpa villages of Baltistan, in the Bagrot and Haramosh valleys: Snoy 1975, 187–214. Jettmar 1957, 26; 1972, 107; 1975, 276–282. Stellrecht [Müller-Stellrecht] 1979, 262–264 and 1980, 65–66. See also more detailed about the shamanistic phenomenon: Friedl 1966 and Sidky 1994.

Dunhuang, which dates between the 8th and 10th century, refers in the description of various Turk tribes and their lords to one individual king, called giant king, and his tribe.[85]

2.3 Shamans and demons: Anthropomorphic figures with mushroom-shaped headdress or solar-heads

In this context of images with ritual background another group of male figures with the so-called mushroom-shaped head or hat should be included. This characteristic image in Central and North Asian rock art is widespread, from the Čukotka peninsula to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and also along the Upper Indus in Ladakh.[86] Another distinct group of anthropomorphic images are marked in silhouette by their crescent shaped headdress, which are known as "mushroom-hatted figures" (Dardarbati Das 1:2). They appear in a wide area of Central Asia and South Siberia, from the Upper Yenisej in the north to central Mongolia and East Kazakhstan in the south.[87] Anthropomorphs with mushroom-like hats form a special group in Siberian rock art (Devlet – Devlet [Dévlet – Dévlet] 2002, 125–128). The figures with the mushroom-shaped headdress are normally integrated in compositions of normal life activities, such as cart drivers, herders, hunters, or warriors, but also in dancing pose as participants of ceremonial rites. Scenes with fighters against monstrous beasts or giant figures may reveal local myths or epics.[88] Generally, the mushroom-headed figures of these rock art complexes are assumed to date to the Bronze Age because of their connection with herding and hunting activities and by their characteristic "vital naturalism unconstrained by stylization", as is indicative of later petroglyphs of the Iron Age.

Archers in hunting scenes show this distinct head dress on stone slabs, which were reused for the quadrangular enclosure of the kurgan at Barsučij Log in the Ust'Abakan district of Chakassia. The kurgan belongs to the Tagar Culture, but this hunting scene on stone slab 12 has been assigned to the Late Bronze Age.[89] The crescent shaped headdress or (Dardarbati Das 1:2) mushroom-shaped silhouette of the head has been explained not to display a special hair-style, wig or head-gear, but in reality a mushroom. Its representation, apparently the fly-agarics, is associated with the common halluzinogenic drug used in shamanistic rituals to communicate with the spirit world. The consumption of the agaric is known from the mythology of the Čukčen, but was widespread in the Altai and Taiga. There are a few clearly prehistoric carvings with dark patination, such as in Dadam Das (Dardarbati Das 1:2), Gichi, Hodar [Hodur], Ziyarat and Ba Das East, which render the characteristic silhouette of the head-dress.[90] An archer at Hodar depicted in side-view is reminiscent of similar carvings in the Altai (10 fig. 10 no. 35:39).

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[85] Lines 50–59 in the Pelliot manuscript PT 1283: *Byang phyogs na rgyal po du bzhugs pa'irje rabs kyi yi ge'o* = "Document on the succession of lords of those who are dwelling as kings in Northern regions", published by: *Bsod nams skyid and Dbang rgyal, Tun hong nas thon pai gna' boi Bod yig shog dril (Ancient Tibetan manuscripts and scrolls from Dunhuang)*, Beijing 1983, 283–284. The manuscript describes briefly Turkic tribes and their lords, their geographic location, military capacity, dwellings, domestic animals, dress, and funeral arrangement. The kind reference to this record is owed to Heather Stoddard, Paris.

[86] + Fn. 86 is missing from the manuscript.

[87] Kalbak-Taš in South Siberia: Kubarev – Jacobson 1996, XIV–XVI pl. 14 figs 107, 115, 149, 284, 423, 429, 440, 449, 451, 452, 468, 473, 510, 511, 628–630, 636, 656, 658. Devlet – Devlet [Dévlet – Dévlet] 2002, 125–128.

[88] Kubarev – Jacobson 1996, XIV–XV figs 451 and 511.

[89] Kovaleva 2010, 265 fig. 154; 273 fig. 162.

Another well-known type of figures representing creatures of apparently supernatural power are so-called "solar-headed" anthropomorphs. These figures play a central role in the rock carving sites of Sajmaly-Taš in the Ferghana mountain range of Kyrgyzstan and of the Tamgaly canyon in the southeastern part of the Chu-Ili Mountains in South Kazakhstan. A total of 30 images of these anthropomorphic beings have been found which are dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Age. In a grandiose multi-figured composition six "sun-headed deities" representing a "pantheon" are worshipped by groups of small-sized adorants, one apparently within a line of ten dancing humans.[91] Divine images of the Tamgaly type are known from the Kul'džabasy and Ak-Kaynar sites in the Chu-Ili mountains with the area of Semirechie. The Tamgaly figures of group IV have been dated to the Middle Bronze Age, i.e. between the 14th – 13th century BC. They are interpreted as creatures of divine nimbus, but also as ghosts or mere shamans wearing a particular headdress. Face masks with upwards running lines and heads surrounded by rays are present on stone stelae of the Okunev Culture in the middle Enisej Valley in the Charkassian-Minusinsk Basin. They have also been interpreted as representations of a sun- or light-god. Sun symbolism has been connected too with the above mentioned famous anthropomorphic figures of the decorated gravestone slabs of Karakol' in the High Altai.[92] A. Rozwadowski pleaded for an interpretation of the so-called sun-gods of Sajmaly-Taš and Tamgaly as shamans while in trance.[93] The enigmatic form of their heads in the shape of elaborately decorated circles, which are surrounded by point-dots or short lines turned upwards, seem to resemble a schematic representation of a radiating sun. The 'solar-headed petroglyphs' are explained as the graphic expression of trance vision caused by ritual drinking of the sacred ambrosia. It is known in the Rig Veda as *soma* and in the Avesta as *haoma.*

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[90] Dadam Das: MANP 5, 2005, 12 fig. 5, no. 36:4. Gichi: MANP 4, 2002, 75 fig. 34, no. 67:15. Hodar [Hodur]: MANP 3, 2001, 18, 20 figs 10, 13 no. 35:39 and 58:4, Ba Das: MANP 10, 2011, 28 pl. 3, no. 53:28, Ba Das East: MANP 10, 2011, 48 pl. 26 no. 5:72.

[91] Sajmaly Taš, Tamgaly: Maryashev [Mar'jačev] – Goryachev 2002, 11–13, 70, 80 pl. I–II, photo 1–9 figs 3–11. For the complete scene of Tamgaly, see: Rogozhinsky 2011, 81, 185–192 figs 59, 151–154, 181–184. Shvets 2012, 114 pl. 27. About the interpretation of solar-headed figures in connection with the veneration of the sun or kosmos, see: Kšica 1966, 57–58 pl. 33–34. For 'solar-headed deities' from Kul'džabasy and Ak-Kaynar, see: Shvets 2012, 192, fn. 4. A solar-headed figure is known from Khanutse in Ladakh, showing the head surrounded by point-dots as in Tamgaly: Bruneau 2012, 82–83 fig. 21. Aldy Mozag: Dévlet 1999, 602–603 fig. 4, 18–36. figs 149, 284, 423, 429, 440, 449, 473, 451, 452, 468, 510. Bazgo Zampa and Murgi Tokpo in Ladakh: Bruneau 2012, 77–78 figs 10–11. Cukcen: Dikov (see Dévlet 1999, 602).

[92] Leont'ev – Kapel'ko 2000, 33 fig. 12.

[93] Rozwadowski 2001, 67–70 fig. 5.1–3; 2012, 282–283 fig. 4. See also Rozwadowski 2012. Rozwadowski – Lymer 2012, 156–157 fig.

2.4 The humped cattle

The scenes with animals and humans clearly show the development in the economy based on simple hunting to an intensified herding of animals, including the domesticated bull and dog, holding them together in groups. It is a new economic pattern which may have its origin in far-off regions such as Swat, Punjab or Sindh, where a more balanced climate and environment favoured the introduction of agriculture. In the present stage of research, especially due to the lack of any excavations in early settlements, it is impossible to date the transition from the food-gathering stage to food-producing economy of the more fertile basins of the Northern Areas. Well-developed double cropping and a balanced farm-breeding system is ascertained for Lower Swat since the beginning of the second millennium BC (Constatini in: Stacul 1987).[94] This new life-style would have mediated by the communication system, transmitted during nomadic movements from upper to lower valleys of the mountain regions.

Wild animals and hunting scenes are still depicted in the same manner as in the early prehistoric periods, but the rendering of the images is sometimes similar to stylised animal motifs of painted pottery. The economy of the inhabitants was based on agriculture, the breeding of cattle and fowl, but also on hunting. In the final phase the keeping of domestic sheep, goats and pigs as well is attested. The appearance of Northern Neolithic food-producing communities in Kashmir, such as Burzahom and Gufkral in the Kashmir Vale and Aligrama and Loebanr in Swat, that are "foreign to Indian tradition", is apparently related to Central Asia during the Okunev Culture.[95] A relation to Central Asian rock art has been proposed also for a singular hunting scene engraved on a stone slab from the Late Neolithic

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10.5. A synopsis of the solar-headed figures is given by Shvets 2012, 112–117. Eškiol'mes, the western spur of Džungarsky Alatau in Almaty oblast: Maryashev [Mar'jačev] – Goryachev 2002, 72–73, 83 fig. 94–97.

[94] + As already noted, HH continues to leave references within the text here and there. Here, after "(Constantini in: Stacul 1987)" added "*wieder s. Possehl SA Archaeology, 120*" = Stacul 1992. Where late additions to the manuscript are involved (these are often found at the end of the line), such references are moved to footnotes.

[95] Allchin – Allchin 1987; Allchin – Chackrabarti eds 1997, 105. The Northern Neolithic of the Northern border region of the Indus is summarized by Possehl – Rissman 1992, I 479–481; Possehl 1999, 542–553. See also Jettmar 2002, 95.

settlement phase II at Burzahom, a site above the marchy flood-plain of Jhelum River in Kashmir, 16 km northeast of Srinagar.[96] It represents a village with two so-called Northern Neolithic occupation levels, the Early Neolithic phase I, 2500–2000 BC and the Late Neolithic phase II, around 2000–1500 BC, followed by a Megalithic phase III (in Gufkral: 1850–1300 BC), and an early historic phase IV.[97] The drawing, which measures 48 × 27 cm, renders a hunting scene under the motif of a double sun. In central position a stag is surrounded by two hunters, the one attacking from behind with a long spear and the other from the front holding a bow of simple segment type and arrow. They are accompanied by a hound which occurs as companion of the hunter also on few even earlier carvings along the Upper Indus (Dadam Das 48:T). The singular hunting scene of Burzahom does not correspond with similar images along the Upper Indus, but the interior patterning of the antlered deer's body has parallels in animal pictures of Yasin and particularly in High Asia.[98] A second slab is engraved with a "tectiform design", which seems to depict a hut with a thatched domical or conical roof ending in a broom shaped spire.[99] The petroglyph could reflect the semi-circular circular or oval dwelling pits of the site. The post-holes around would indicate a superstructure of timber with mud-bricks.

Surprisingly, there are pictures of domesticated animals, such as the majestic zebu bull, the humped South Asian cattle (*Bos indicus* Linn.).[100] This easily satisfied and tenacious race of bovids may have been domesticated as early as the 8th millennium in Baluchistan, and occurs frequently on the Iranian plateau and the Indus plains. It is common in Swat and in the lowlands since the fourth and third millennium BC. It was also the most important domesticated animal of the Indus Age, especially in the Mature Harappa phase when zebu bones constitute about half of the faunal remains in all known sites.[101] The first evidence for a humped breed in Baluchistan comes even from Neolithic faunal remains at Mehrgarh I, and there are also zebu terracotta figurines from period III of this and other sites (6th – 5th millennium BC).[102] The zebu bull with its heavy dewlap and wide-curving horns is the most striking feature carved on the Indus seals, which are mainly found in Moenjodaro and Harappa.[103] Also in the rock art in Baluchistan this characteristic animal occurs both in red paint or as a carving in sites such as Olangi and Gumbadi in the Ras-Koh Rand, the Kharan District or in Sindh at Sado Mazo in Johi and at Shakloi Dhoro in Gaj Valley of the Khirthar range.[104]

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[96] For the stone slab with the hunting scene, see: Pande 1971, 134–138, fig. 1 and pl. 1. Bhowmick 1996, 54 with different datings for phase I: around 2375 BC and 1300–1200 BC for phase II. Possehl 1999, 542 fig. 4.77 and 4.78. Sharma 2000, 50, 97 fig. 13A, pl. XIV. Jettmar 2002, 95. Chakraverty 2003, 17 fig. 7 assumed a dating into phase II of the Northern Neolithic of Kashmir. – Stacul 1979, 671 stressed "affinities between the cultural complexes represented by periods III and IV in Swat Valley" and phases I and II of Burzahom (common use of round dwelling-pits and grey-black polished ware).

[97] For the radiocarbon dates of Burzahom and Gufkral, see: Sharma 2000, 127–131.

[98] + Side annotation: "In contrast, unlike the animals with a narrow waist the geometric bi-triangular forms".

[99] Possehl 1999, 542 fig. 4.77 and 4.78. Sharma 2000, 50 fig. 13B.

[100] Chilas V: Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13. Thalpan: MANP 9 no. 780:1. Ziyarat: MANP 10: no. 85:1; 100:11, 151:8. Gogdara I (Swat): Olivieri 1998, 71 fig. 14. Alingar in Bajaur: Rehman 1997, 30 pl. 1b. See also an "Aeneolithic" carving of a humped bull from Attok: de Terra 1940, 46 and from Baluchistan: Kakar 2005, 24 fig. 7.

[101] Possehl 1999, 175–177. For terracotta figurines of the zebu, see: Ardeleanu-Jansen 1993, 146–147.

Rock carving clusters at Chinnot in Punjab show humped cattle as predominant theme like in Karnataka rock art. From a possibly Iron Age rock art site on the west bank of the Indus at Ghariala below the Attok Bridge the image of a stylised humped bull has been noted.[105]

The red figure of a humped bull is depicted in the painted shelter of the Brahmkund Hill in Rajasthan which is dated as early as the Mesolithic.[106] A painted scene of two zebus connected by a yoke and held by a man is known from a rock shelter near Hathitol in the Raisen area of the Bhopal region. They clearly represent an agricultural practice dating to the "Neolithic-Chalcolithic period".[107] Also in South India from the beginning of the Neolithic the early agricultural economy was centred around cattle-breeding. In rock carving sites from the north Karnataka hills above the Deccan plateau the familiar Indian humped cattle, depicted singly or in groups, is the predominant theme. From Neolithic sites in the surroundings, such as Piklihal, not only bones from humped cattle are attested, but also terracotta figurines of this long-horned animal, which seems to be of different origin than the heavier breed in the Indus Valley.[108] The early Neolithic period in the Karnataka region is datable through radiocarbon to the third millennium BC. The famous cave-paintings of Bhimbetka to the south of Madhya Pradesh show depictions of the humped cattle in their earlier stylistic groups.[109]

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[102] Meadow 1984 and 1993. Humped cattle as a decoration motif on painted pottery from Mehrgarh III: Jarrige et al. 1995, 137 fig. 2.21a, or as figurines from Mehrgarh IV: Jarrige et al. 138 fig. 2.38a,e. In Nausharo, Baluchistan, the motif occurs on a painted jar of 'Pre-Indus Culture' Period I D (ca. 2700–2500 BC): Quivron 1993, 632 fig. 54.3; Kenoyer 1998, 44 fig. 2.18. – In Rana Ghundai the first appearance of the bull motif in period II is called the "Bull" Period. From Indus Civilization and Harappan Period (Amri ID, IIB and Kulli): Casal 1964, 62, 207; 64, 212; 72, 301. Possehl 1982, 92 fig. 7.8; 119 fig. 10, 21 [+ Possehl 1983]. Possehl 2002, 27–28, 40 fig. 2.10; 223.

[103] Alone 44 seals from Moenjodaro. One example with a zebu is known from Kalibangan: Franke-Vogt 1991, 66, 163 pl. XXVI, 154–158. See also: Kenoyer 1998, 84 fig. 5.7.

[104] Baluchistan: Hasan 1996, 65 pl. 6 and 8. Sindh: Kalhoro 2009, 97–99 fig. 5–9, 23; 2012, 210 fig. 5–6. Abro 2011, 253, 274–279, 284.

[105] Gordon 1956, 59–60 pl. 37b.

[106] Sharma 1969, 19 fig. 2.

[107] Pamday 1993, 65 pl. 22.

[108] Allchin – Allchin 1994–1995; Allchin – Allchin 1997; Allchin – Chakrabarti eds 1997, 102 pl. 26 (rock bruising from Maski, Raichure District in Deccan).

[109] The humped cattle appear in Indian painted rock art since Chalcolithic period II, according to Wakankar 1975 [+ = 1975a or 1975b]; Chakraverty 2003, 27 diagram 2 and 4, in Bhimbetka IV. See also: Misra – Mathpal – Nagar 1977.

A singular terracotta model, known as "cow-boat", is shaped as a vehicle with the body of a bull.[110] An enthroned female figure is surrounded by male attendants, and arranged between the roofed throne and the prow are female and male couples. The group sculpture is dated to the third millennium BC and reveals the unique impression of a performed ritual during the Indus culture. The dominating image of the bull's head with its prominent horns on the prow demonstrates the power of the humped bull in the imaginative world.[111] Its depiction in the rock art of this period in Yasin belongs to the same semantic sphere as in other early civilizations of Eurasia.

The *Bubalus arnee* even appears on Akkadian seals of the kings Sargon, Naramsuen and Šarkališarri in a manner that is typical for representations on Indus seals. This bovid (Sumerian *áb-za-za*) was apparently imported from the Indus Valley to the royal zoos during the period of Akkad in the late third millennium BC.[112] Their occurrence there has been connected with Sargon's trade connections to Makkan and as far as Meluḫḫa, which includes also the lower Indus region.[113]

Until now the rock art assemblage of Ba Das East 22:10,11) yielded the only clear-cut images of a yak *(Bos* [*Poephagus*] *mutus)*, which because of its dark patina can be dated to an early prehistoric period.[114] Contrary to the lower part of the Upper Indus, the wild species occurs in the rock art of Yasin, where at Murkha it is included in lively hunting scenes.[115] In its wild form the yak has survived only in Tibet and in western China. In its domesticated form *(Bos* [*Poephagus*] *mutus)*, it is widespread as a work animal in Central Asian mountain areas, and occurs also in the upper valleys of Gilgit, Yasin and Hunza as well as in Baltistan. In the rock art gallery of Murkha in Yasin the yak is depicted within lively hunting scenes. Cattle appear also with few testimonies in the early group of carvings (Ba Das 71:4).

The carvings around Chilas may thus reflect the presence of cattle breeders also in the fertile basins along the Upper Indus, at least during the Bronze Age. They need not necessarily be connected with the proposed intrusion of Okunev people into the southern mountain valleys.

3 Northern Nomads in the Upper Indus Valley During the Bronze Age

During the second millennium BC, the history of the mountain areas still remains in relative darkness. Yet, the interconnections between Central Asia and the Upper Indus region did indeed continue. Tribes of the Middle Bronze Age Andronovo-Fedorovka culture and its southern group Andronovo-Tazabag'jab, which occupied a large area in West and South Siberia from the Urals in the west to the Enisej River in the east, from the woodlands in the north to the Syr-Darya with the Bactrian oasis in the south, are said to have been the initiators of contacts between the Eurasian steppes and Xinjiang.[116] Especially since the Middle and Late Bronze Age new elements, such as pastoral husbandry, the increasing role of cattle- and horse-breeding, the breeding of woolly sheep, and finally the spread of mining and specialised metallurgy, caused changes in the social life. In particular, the origin of the domestic horse and the skill of horse-breeding have been much disputed. The earliest horse-domestication took place during the second half of the third millennium BC according to archaeological finds in the Near East and Central Asia. The epoch is marked by new economic and technical innovations, which set a dynamic process under way with differentiated social and political changes. Among the fundamentally new contrivances were the introduction of the wheel and the wagon, and the domestication of the horse and its training as draught animal and mount, which enabled larger population groups wider spatial mobility.

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[110] + Vidale 2011.

[111] + Here HH uses the German term "Vorstellungswelt".

[112] Boehmer 1974. Collon 1987, 187 fig. 907.

[113] + See also Frenez – Vidale 2015.

[114] MANP 11, 2013: Ba Das East 22:10 and 11. Another possible picture of a yak has been noted at Ziyarat: [Bandini-] König 1994, 81–82 fig. 35.

[115] Hallier 1991.

3.1 Megalithic circles: Sepulchral monuments or thalis *[Table 10.2]*

Some light has been shed on this period by the discovery of these new archaeological elements, as well as significant motifs in the rock art. From sites in Yasin and Ishkoman northwest of Gilgit groups of megalithic circles have become known, which were erected close together. The monumental stone-circle of Seleharan situated on the tongue of land formed by the junction of the rivers Ghizer and Yasin near Gupis was described for the first time by Biddulph in 1880 as a "circular stone sepulchral mound at Chashi".[117] "The remarkable stone tables are about 30 feet in diameter, and are formed of huge boulders arranged with great precision with flat side outwards, so placed as to form a perfect circle about 3½ feet high. On these are placed a number of flattish boulders of nearly equal size, projecting a few inches beyond the edge of the circle all round. The centre is filled with small stones and rubbish, which may or may not have been as originally intended". It is noticeable that Biddulph did not mention any indications of human burials; thus, Jettmar could offer another suggestion in regard to their meaning, because of the fact that also no scientific excavation of such a monument had ever been made.[118] Locals of the Noh village in Yasin, who had dismantled some stone-circles, reported that in the gravel filling the interior of the circles up to the height of one meter, large bones were found, apparently of animals like cows, sheep or goats. There were no remains of human burials, no grave-goods found. Jettmar saw these monuments as "*thalis*" considering modern ethnographic traditions. A *thali* is a memorial for a living person, who is allowed to sit on a raised platform receiving praise and congratulations of the community. Before the ceremony, the relatives and followers had to build the platform during what we may call a "Feast of Merit". Many animals were slaughtered and eaten during such preparations, the bones were mixed with the earth and gravel fill. The Hatun stone circles were called by locals "thrones of princes".[119] The custom to build *thalis* was spread over a large territory including Gilgit, while megalithic stone-circles occur only near Gupis, in Yasin, Ishkoman, and near the Phander lake in the Ghizer Valley. Around Noh village in Yasin five stone circles were mapped in 2011, which show the same characteristic design and construction as the monument of Seleharan.[120]

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[116] Kuzmina 2001 and 2007. Parzinger 2006, 439.

[117] Biddulph 1880, 57–58. See Jettmar 1967a, 75 fig. 19 and 1975, 213 fig. 4. The curious "sepulchral mounds at Chashi" were described in more detail by Schomberg 1935, 45 assuming their function "as burial places". Dani 2001, 111 pl. 5. A photo of the stone circle is found in: Albinia 2008, 234–235 fig. 26. Stone circles near Hatun on a terrace above the Ishkoman River, "thrones of the raja", are mentioned by Stein 1944, 11, for photos see Hallier 1991, 6–7 fig. 5–6. Apparently already Vigne (1844, vol. II, 309) had information about "the existence of a large circle of stones" at Yasin.

At Daeen in the Ishkoman Valley an early group of megalithic circles, similar to grave enclosures from the Late Bronze Age in the Trans-Himalayas, has been attested.[121] They are the only megalithic graves that yielded an archaeological dating to the second half of the second millennium BC. Due to the lack of systematic investigations, the problem still remains, as to whether any relations to the Megalithic Age existed at Kashmir. The third settlement period at sites on the terraces of Jhelum River like Burzahom is associated with the construction of massive megalithic circles or partial circles, and the introduction of a new pottery of coarse red ware replacing that with a grey and black surface.[122] In Gufkral the second occupation phase belongs to the Megalithic Period.

The new cultural elements have been explained by the arrival of a new wave of population during the beginning of the second quarter of the second millennium BC. Radiocarbon dates cover a stage of time between 1850–1300 BC. The stone circles of Ishkoman are clearly of earlier origin than the Southern Iron-Age "megaliths" in South India.[123]

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[118] Jettmar 1975, 229–230, 235.

[119] Hallier 1991, 7.

[120] See Dani 2001, 111, 118 pl. 5 depicting stone-circle Dadur south of Noh within the farm of Shamsur Rahman.

[121] Dani 2001, 422–433.

[122] Sharma 2000, 107–113.

[123] Allchin 1968, 223–232.

3.2 Images of cattle and chariots

Pictures of cattle as for example the carving of a zebu from Chilas V[124] have been associated also with the appearance of domesticated horses during the Middle and Late Bronze Age, when the first two-wheeled carts and chariots came into common use in Central Asia and in the Near East, the most momentous innovation during the development of early civilizations. The earliest evidence of chariot burials at Sintašta and Krivoe Ozero in the Ural-Kazakh steppes suggests that spoke-wheeled vehicles and specifically war chariots with a light frame might have been invented in the western steppes during the late third millennium BC.[125] Burials with chariots and horses, for example at Berlik, Kenes, Sintašta and Krivoe Ozero, are characteristic for the earlier part of the Andronovo Culture, i.e. the Sintašta-Arkaim-Petrovka Complex of the southeast Ural piedmont and the Isim plain representing a new society of warlords during the Early Bronze Age in Kazakhstan. The earliest chariot burials at Sintašta with five chariots and at Krivoe Ozero are dated to about 2200–1800 BC.[126]

The origin and spread of the chariot can be explained as the result of a "technological transfer" on the basis of increased communication from the Near Eastern-Iranian region and South Siberian-Kazakh regions to the Central Asian "Bactrian Margiana Archaeological Complex"

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[124] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13. The carving of a zebu, perhaps with a cart or plough at Thalpan: MANP 9 no. 780:1.

[125] See Parzinger 2006, 321, 325, 341. A general synopsis of the earliest wheeled transport in Eurasia can be found in Novozhenov – Kuzmina (eds) 2012. The carvings of two-wheeled chariots, the wheels with four spokes, at Saimaly Taš I and II with 37 images of vehicles (Kyrgyzstan), Ak Jilga (Uzbekistan) are dated between the end of 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC: Sher 1980, 132 fig. 56, 197 figs 107 and 109. Martynov et al. 1992, 41 fig. 88; Novozhenov 1994; Tashbayeva et al. 2001, 28–29 figs 19–22; 135–137 figs 7–8. Karakiyasay (Uzbekistan): Khodzhanazarov 1995, figs 29, 36, 45. Kul'džabasy mountains (Kazakhstan): Bairakov – Mar'iašev 2004, 20–21 figs 2, 3, 22, 30, 37. See also Rozwadowski 2004, 24–27. – Ustju-Mozaga mountain (South Siberia): Dévlet 2004, 40–42 figs 17, 1–3. The Upper Tsagaan Gol complex in the Altai (West Mongolia): Jacobson-Tepfer – Kubarev – Tseveendorj 2006, 55–56 figs 154, 771, 879, 887. Khöltsöötiin Gol: Jacobson-Tepfer – Meacham 2010, 23 no. 2.9 (Upper Tsagaan Gol) and 105 no. 11.166–167. The sites Umnd ool and Ikh Berkh in Govi aimag: Jang 2008, 238 fig. 107, 243 fig. 113. Getseliin Uss, Bayan Hongor aimag in Mongolia: Derevianko [Derevyanko] – Olsen 1998, 123 fig. 173–174 (Early Iron Age). For chariot representations from Arpauzen, Bajan Žurek, Eškiol'mes, Kanač, Karatau, Semirechye, Tamgaly, Usek in Kazakhstan, see: Medoev 1979, 158 pl. 29; Mariyashev [Mar'jačev] 1994, 29–30 fig. 68–75; Littauer 1997, 245–247 figs 9–14. Mar'iašev – Goriačev 2002, tab. IV; Z. Samašev 2006, 31.33; – Bairakov – Mariyashev [Mar'jačev] – Potapov – Goryachev 2005, 81–82, 95 figs 35, 44, 46, 92, 99 and Bairakov – Mariashev – Potapov 2006, 68, 76–77 photos 35, 59; Bairakov – Mariashev 2008, 84–85 figs 27–29, photo 75, Rogozhinsky 2011, figs 146, 155, 9. Aldy-Mozaga, Tuve: Dévlet 1999, 605–607 fig. 7, 13–26.

[126] + Here HH added a side annotation: "Parpola 2004–2005, 4 (Sintasta-Gandhara) Horse-drawn chariots of S. and Petrovka cult. Parpola 2015, 58–59.".

(BMAC) at the turn of the third to the second millennium BC.[127] This cultural complex of the Middle and early Late Bronze Age, coined by the Soviet archaeologist Victor I. Sarianidi in 1974,[128] comprises the regions of the Murgab Delta, South Uzbekistan and North Afghanistan, the areas of ancient Bactria (*baxtriš* in Old Persian) and Margiana *(margv)*. Gonur Depe in the desert Karakum of Turkmenistan, a central site of ancient Margiana, yielded evidence for trade connections with the Indus civilization by imported raw materials and luxury products from the south. There is no archaeological or biological evidence for mass migrations from Central Asia across the high mountain ranges into the Indus Valley between the end of the Harappan Phase, ca. 1900 BC and the beginning of the Early Iron Age. The technological innovation is therefore not connected with migrations of Indo-Aryan groups to the southern regions as has been proposed.[129]

The earliest rock carvings of carriage and pair of draught animals occur in Central Asian sites during the Okunev Culture (?). The horse-drawn cart usually is depicted in the same manner, showing the cart from above and the horses turned with their backs against each other. This manner of depiction has been connected with burial customs thus representing the position of horse and chariot above or beneath the owner's grave. Since such images occur also in regions which by virtue of their mountainous landscape are unsuitable for a normal use of chariots, they were viewed as a prestigious or first and foremost as a ritual object, a vehicle to transfer the dead to the next world.[130] This irreal or transcendental meaning of these representations could be confirmed by the depiction of different draught animals, such as ibex, goat, oxen and horse. The chariot was also an effective instrument of war and sport, which therefore was promptly adopted by the elites of peoples neighbouring the Eurasian steppes, where it had evolved.

Few representations of a horse-drawn chariot with an archer behind it, such as at Thor North and in the possible image at Hodar [Hodur] (69:62), thus suggest the infiltration of a new life style introduced by a chiefdom of cattle and sheep herders and horse-breeders.[131] The picture of the chariot therefore fits in the milieu of the bi-triangular animal drawings. Contrary to Central Asian images, the animals on both sides of the shaft are drawn one on top of the other. Another type of long cart is drawn by a yoke of oxen as seen on a rock engraving from the bank of the Middle Indus at Darwaua near Attok.[132] For this group of carvings below the Attok Bridge a date in the first millennium BC has been suggested. A group of images showing oxen-drawn carts, in one case with two figures standing on the platform of the cart box, has been found in the rock art site of Kalri in the Johi tahsil of the Dadu District in Sindh.[133]

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[127] The BMAC is dated from around 2500 to 1800 BC. Teufer 2012 and 2018.

[128] Sarianidi 1974, 54.

[129] + Here HH added a side annotation: "*Aufsatz Teufer 2012 einarbeiten*".

[130] Jettmar 1994, 169 saw in rock-carvings of the Asian steppes showing chariots with archer even the image of the 'Hyperboraean Apollon'.

[131] Thor North: Jettmar 1980c, 195, 203 fig. 1; 1982a, 25 fig. 11; 1985, 755–757 fig. 6; 1994, 168; 2002, 96. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13; Francfort 2003, 191–194 fig. 1. Kuzmina 1994, 409 saw a direct connection of the Thor image with the chariots of the Aryans in India, as "described in Vedic texts and the *Mahābhārata*". The *ratha* "was single-axled and had a pole, two wheels with spokes and a body". For further comparisons in Central Asian rock art, see: Kuzmina 2007, 338.

The same origin of carts such as those on the Upper Indus should be assumed also for the few depictions of chariots with a pair of horses found in painted rock shelters in Swat, such as with two clear examples from Gogdara I and one from Lekha gata in Swat Valley, ascribed to the Late Bronze Age (post-1400 BC). Another possible chariot has been noted in painted designs of the Kakai-kandao 1 complex. The subject at Lekha gata in combination with mounted warriors and a bi-triangular horse-like animal seem to reflect foreign activities in a region, which like the narrow basins in the Indus Valley is not a terrain suited to the employment of chariots.[134] The rock carvings of Gogdara I and Kandak as well as the paintings of Sargahsar and Kakai-kandao intercede for the impression of a transition from the dominating role accorded to hunting to the new life style characterised by agriculture and animal husbandry. This change took place during the early to middle second millennium BC as revealed by distinct cultural traits in the rock art from Swat and also from the stratigraphical sequence of sites like Ghālegay between period III (1900–1700 BC) and IV (1700–1400 BC). The "Inner Asian complex" in the high mountain region emphasizes the impression of close connections with Central and North Asia.[135]

The common use of bullock-carts for land transport during the Harappan civilization in the southern lowlands of the 'Greater Indus System'[136] is obvious by the appearance of terracotta model carts, whereby long-distance travel in areas where the terrain was unsuitable for using carts seems to have been based on pack-animals. The use of the horse has been assumed for the elite or for ceremonial purposes, because there is only scanty evidence of horse bones from Harappan contexts.[137] Images of horses, but also camels occur neither on seals nor as terracotta models, apart from a few equid figurines from Moenjodaro and Lothal which have been "purely tentatively" identified as horses. The horse-drawn chariot is generally connected with the appearance of early Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan speaking communities. This innovation was introduced during the Late Harappan period, as evidenced by the painting of a zebu-drawn, two-wheeled cart on a bottle from Inamgaon in the west Indian region of Dekkan, which is dated to the early Jorwe phase (around 1500 BC).[138]

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[132] King 1940, 68 fig. 9. Gordon 1956, 59 pl. 38b, referring on p. 60 to other painted images of carts in shelters of the Doda hill near the village of Chargul in Mardan District (K-P).

[133] Kind information by Zülfikar Ali Kalhoro, Islamabad.

[134] Gogdara: Olivieri 1998, 73 fig. 15; 2008, 17, 22 fig. 12. Lekha gata: Olivieri – Vidale 2004, 154–155 fig. 29. Possible chariot in Kakai-kandao 1 complex: Vidale – Olivieri 2002, 195 fig. 9. See also Bruneau 2012, 81–82 fig. 19: there is only one carving of a chariot known from Ladakh, at Trishul, with the animals back to back on both sides of the shaft, stylistically close to Central Asian rock images.

[135] Stacul 1987; Stacul 1991.

[136] The Greater Indus System comprises the Indus plains with the surrounding hills and valleys, the ancient courses of the Sarasvati River, see Allchin – Allchin 1997; Allchin – Chakrabarti eds 1997, 113.

[137] Possehl 1999, 185–189.

A remarkable painting in a rock shelter at Morhana Pahar in Central India, dating to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age, shows two horse-drawn chariots with armed charioteers. One of the carts is attacked by two warriors. This scene together with a horseman shown fighting with archers apparently reveal a combat scene between two different social groups and cannot be "connected with an event during the Aryan invasion".[139] The painting may be the work of devotees of Surya, the sun god, because one charioteer has a disc as sun symbol in the hand.

It is the period during the second millennium, when pastoral-agricultural economies emerged in the steppes of Central Asia along with a developed bronze industry. The Andronovo-Fedorovka societies introduced this new way of life to the northern Eurasian forest zones east of the Urals, to northern Kazakhstan, the Central Asian desert-steppes and oasis as far as to Xinjiang. Its northern part, the Džungaria, was interconnected through Ili with South Kazakhstan. The development of a predecessor of the "Great Silk Road" connecting Xinjiang with the Eurasian steppes has thus been attributed to these pastoral tribes. The motif of the single-axle cart with two spoked wheels finds numerous parallels in the Late Bronze Age rock art of Central Asia, Western Tien Shan, Altai, South Siberia and Mongolia, and occurs as well in the pottery decoration of the Middle Bronze Age Andronovo-Fedorovka Culture in the Eastern Steppes. The rock carving sites of Kazakhstan provide evidence for more than 100 petroglyphs of carts, horse-drawn chariots with spoked wheels in the majority, the largest group of this motif in Central Asia. They occur in a period dating from the Middle Bronze Age to the period of the early nomads, i.e. not before the 17th – 16th century BC. A few examples date even as late as the middle of the first millennium BC. On the basis of their occurrence in Karatau in South Kazakhstan, the most ancient group of carvings was assigned to a "period of bulls and chariots".[140] The rock carving sites of Shart-tshang and rGya-Gling in Upper Tibet have revealed two rare specimens of horse-drawn carts with two wheels of four spokes, each of which clearly reveal interconnections with northern Inner Asia. They are thought to date around 1000 BC.[141] This pan-steppe phenomenon seems to have anticipated the emergence of the later Saka-Scythian world. But, the full nomadic-pastoralism with the riding-horse used by a predatory warrior-elite for military expansion does not seem to appear until the Iron Age.

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[138] Sankalia 1974, 505 fig. 204. See also Kenoyer 2004, 104 fig. 17.

[139] Rock shelter at Morhana Pahar, Mirzapur District, in the Vindhya hills overlooking the Ganges Valley: Allchin 1958 and 1987, 141 fig. 2.

[140] Kadyrbaev – Mar'yashev 1977, 156–158.

[141] Bellezza 2008, 195–196 fig. 367. For images of horse-drawn chariots on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, see Qinghai 2001, 259.

3.3 Scythians/Sakas in the Upper Indus region

The third chronologically and stylistically defined main group in rock art is represented above all by animals, which because of their characteristic, slightly abstract features all belong to the so-called Eurasian "Animal Style". The term "Scythian Animal Style" was first coined by Mikhail Rostovtzeff in his description of the art of the nomads in the Eurasian steppes during the first millennium BC.[142] The repertoire is reduced to isolated figures of mainly goats and few deer. Sometimes they occur in pairs as also in the characteristic animal hunting scenes. The distinct imagery marks the presence of 'Northern Nomads', descendent from the "nomadic world" in the Central Asian steppes. Assyrian sources report of several nomadic invasions from the "Nomadic World" into the Near East by the Cimmerians, the *Gimirrāiu*, between the reign of the Neo-Assyrian kings Sargon II (722–705 BC) and Assurbanipal (669–662 BC). They were followed by a second wave of nomadic invaders, the Scythians, which were first mentioned in texts of King Esarhaddon (681–669 BC) as the people *Išg/kuzā(ja) (Išk/guzāiu)*. From the country *A/Išg/kuza* they crossed the Caucasus mountains into Iran and for nearly a century threatened the political scenery of the Near East as far as to the gates of Egypt. Their homeland *Iškuza* is equated with the wide-ranging classical Scythia in southwestern Russia.

The Median Great King Kyaxares at last was able to bring the Scythian menace to a sudden end in 616 BC and to expel these rider nomads from his realm into the northern steppes. The founder of the Achaemenid Empire Kyros II (559–529 B.C), the son of Kambyses I and the grandson of Kyros I, penetrated with a military expedition to Central Asia through Baxtriš (Bactria) into the territory of Suq(u)da (Sogdiana). With the foundation of a powerful frontier fortress named Cyropolis (Kurkath) on the Iaxartes in the Ferghana as a bulwark against the migrant hordes of tribes who perpetually threatened Iran from the steppes of Turan and as far afield as Outer Mongolia, he (Kyros II) established the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) river as northern border of his empire. But as Alexander's historian Arrian testified (Arr. *Ind.* IX 10), "no one else ever invaded India, not even Kyros, son of Kambyses, though he made an expedition against the Scythians and in all other ways was the most energetic of the kings of Asia". According to Herodotus possibly Kyros was killed campaigning against the Massagetae, which have been equated with the "*Sakā tigraxaudā*" under their queen Tomyris, somewhere northeast of the Aral Sea between the lower Amu Darya (Oxus) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes), and was buried in Pasargadai (Hdt. I 201–214) (Jacobs: AMIT 32, 92 ff.).[143]

In Persian royal inscriptions the name *Sakā* for a people and country *(dahyāva)* is also used for Scythians and may designate eastern nomadic groups inhabiting the vast steppes to the north of the Persian empire.[144] Herodotus (Hdt. VII 64) refers to the name Saka, which was given by the Persians to all of the Scythians, without any other specification. According to Herodotus (Hdt. III 93) the Saka together with another nomadic tribe, the Kaspians, belonged to satrapy 15, which had to pay 250 talents as tribute to the king Dareios I. Szemerényi interpreted the name, as used by the Achaemenids, as a generic term for all northern nomads. It simply meant 'wanderer', 'vagrant nomad', as deduced from the root *sak-* 'go, roam'.[145] In the cuneiform rock inscription from the tomb of Great King Dareios I (522–485 BC) at Naqš-i Rustam and in the so-called Achaemenid provincial lists, two eastern Scythian tribes are denoted with the names Saka. These two groups in the northeast extreme of the Achaemenid Empire are located north of the *dahyu* or *dahyāva* of Baxtriš (Bactria) and of Suq(u)da (Sogdia).[146]

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[142] Rostovtzeff 1922, 51–52. [+ Jettmar 1999b].

[143] The three different versions (Berossos frgt. 5, Hdt. I 214, Ctesias [Phot., Bibl.] XI, 37–39) about Kyros' death are discussed by Vogelsang 1992a, 187–189. See also Francfort 1985.

The *Sakā tigraxaudā*, no. 20 in the Bisutun list of the northeastern Saka, whose typical headgear is the tall and pointed *(tigra)* cap *(xaudra)*, the *kurbasia* – (according to Herodotus, "tapering to a point and standing stiffly erect": Hdt. I 215–216; VII 64) may be connected with the Massagetae, whom he settled east of the Kaspi Lake in Transoxania. Because of their name, the "pointed-cap bearers", this group has been equated with the Orthokorybantioi after Herodotus (Hdt. III 92).[147] They belonged to satrapy 10 under the reign of Dareios I, which is located in the northeast of the Iranian plateau. However, the pointed head dress was worn by other Scythian tribes as well.

Representatives of this group in their characteristic costume occur in the reliefs of the South wing of the East side and of the West wing of the North side of the staircase leading to the Apadāna, the Audience Hall of Dareios I (522–486 BC). Among the 18 depicted delegations of the 23 subject peoples they are recorded as no. 11. Similarly, this delegation appears under 23 depicted peoples as no. 11 on the façade reliefs of the royal tombs of Naqš-i Rustam.[148] They correspond to the throne bearers no. 22P in the reliefs of palace E and of the "Hall of Hundred Columns M", the other more public Throne Hall of the palace in Persepolis.

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[144] [+ Here HH addedd: "(vorher 79) Herrmann 1933"]; Junge 1939, 60–82. 83–105; Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949, 41; Herzfeld 1968, 327–329. Vogelsang 1992a, 106–108. 113–116 fig. 1, 2 c.d; Hachmann 1995, 199. 204. 205.

[145] Szemerényi 1980, 40–46. [+ See Thomas 1906, and more impontant of the same subject Daffiinà 1967)].

[146] Maps showing the areas of both groups: Nagel 1982, 86 [208, Beilage 6]; see also Nagel 1983; Jacobs 1994, 224–225 Karte VI.

[147] Schiltz 1994, 291.

[148] Tomaschek 1889, 46–48. Junge 1939, 62 footnote 6, pl. 1; Walser 1966, 48: Naqš-I Rustam, tomb I: 53. 55 nos 14. 15 figs 5–6. Falttafel 1: no. 14.15. Naqš-i Rustam, tomb V and VI: Calmeyer 2009, 31, 37 no. 15 pl. 10,1; 14,5; 26,2. Apadāna: the assignment of the Scythians as 11th delegation to the *Sakā tigraxaudā* or to European Scythians is still disputed: Walser 1966, 84–86, pl. 18. 58. 83 and Falttafel 2, no. 11. Roaf 1983, 54 fig. 53, 61, 131 suggested a definite identification as *Sakā tigraxaudā*. See also Gropp 2009, 288. Central building: no. 11, Hall of 1000 Columns: W6 and Palace of Artaxerxes I: XI after Roaf 1983, fig. 131.

Warriors in one of the few depicted battle scenes dated to the Achaemenid period by virtue of their uniform, the Median costume and specific armament, have been assigned to a certain northern nomadic group. They wear the characteristic tall and pointed headgear, which normally is seen as a characteristic indication for the *Sakā tigraxaudā* and the *Sakā tayaiy paradrayā*. It marks the significant feature of *Skunxa* (in Elamite *Iš-ku-in-ka*, 'the outstanding'), the chieftain of a Saka confederation. It may recall one of the campaigns of Dareios I against the 'false or illoyal (Old Persian *arīkā*) Saka' in the third year of his reign, in 519/518 BC, as described in the fifth column of the Bisutun inscription.[149] He is depicted on the famous Bisutun (Behistun) rock relief of Dareios I, which represents the only monument in Achaemenid art with a direct connection to certain historical events as recorded in the trilingual inscriptions, in Elamite, New Babylonian and Old Persian: The proclamation of his victory of 522 BC against his most dangerous enemy, the Median magician Gaumata (Bardiya), who had succeeded King Kambyses II (530–522 BC), and the other nine "liar kings'". In the scene the captive rebellious chiefs with their hands bound behind their backs and chained together by the neck appear in front of the great king under the sign of Ahura Mazda.[150] The representation of the Saka king, seems to have been added later: He and his until then not subjugated tribe were captured during the victorious campaign against insurgent Saka tribes, apparently the *Sakā tigraxaudā* and *Sakā haumavargā* in the third year of the great king's reign in 519 BC. The Saka king is dressed in the uniform Medic costume as worn by the Persian warriors drawn on the Altar Rock at Thalpan [Table 15].

The pointed-hat Saka appear as the opponents of victorious Persians also in a few narrative scenes. A striking battle frieze, which may refer to a concrete historical event such as the campaigns of Dareios I against nomadic tribes around 519/518 or 513/512 BC, decorates a painted wooden tomb chamber of a tumulus near Tatarlı in the west Anatolian province of Afyonkarahisar.[151] The defeated Scythians are clearly distinguishable from the attacking

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[149] Dandamaev 1976, 254 [+ see also Dandamaev 1994].

[150] The most comprehensive study of the Bisutun relief is owed to Luschey 1968, 79–80 fig. 5, pl. 31–32, 41. Walser 1966, 28–29, 85–86 fig. 7. Vanden Berghe 1984, 115 pl. 6. – Skunxa has been designated as king of the *Sakā tigraxaudā* by Dandamaev 1976, 7–9, 156–166, 254 pl. 2–3; 1994, 44–45 fig. 2. Jacobs 2017, 224 fig. 1,1 and 4.

[151] Summerer 2007a, 18–20; 1976b, 134–136 fig. 2; 2008, 283–284 fig. 6; 2010, 126–144. Diler 2017, 292 fig. 6. About the *kurbasia* of the Scythian warriors, see: Ağtürk 2014, 59–60 fig. 4c. Rare battle and pursuit scenes between Persians and Scythians, mainly between horsemen showing a Persian spearing a Scythian, occur on cylinder seals, seal stones or scaraboids of Graeco-Persian origin, which belong to the Bolsena group: Ghirshman 1964a, 268 fig. 331 (Battle scene between Medes and Scythians: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale). Lukonin – Iwanow 1996, 74 no. 27 (Sankt-Peterburg / Leningrad). Muscarella 1981, 227–229, no. 178 (ca. 400 BC, Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem). A possible combat or pursuit scene with Persians and fleeing Scythian horsemen is depicted on a bulla from Daskyleion: Kaptan 2002, 80 DS 91 pl. 272–273. Achaemenid seal in British Museum, London: The Great King vanquishes Scythians, shown in their typical dress and headgear, armed with bow in gorytus. [+ here HH added: "Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art* IV, 124, x" = Pope 1938].

Persians by their different dress and headgear. In the central single scene the victorious Persian, whose crenelated cylindrical crown *(kidaris)* indicates the rank as a noble, perhaps the local dynast, is stabbing the Scythian chief. The scene of the general duel recalls the standard theme in Achaemenid art in several variations, in which in the "Master of Animal" composition the royal Persian hero kills the attacking mythical creature or beast of prey, in particular a lion, or in fewer contest scenes – a human enemy. The battle scene could refer to one of the historic clashes with invading nomadic rider warriors over supremacy in the western part of the Achaemenid Empire. The owner of the tomb, an Anatolian dignitary, or one of his ancestors, might have fought in one of these battles.[152] The painting may also recall one of the campaigns of Dareios I against the *Sakā tigraxaudā* in the third year of his reign in 519 BC, as described in the fifth column of the Bisutun inscription. Their defeated chief Skunxa is shown on the rock relief of Bisutun in 519/518 BC. Or it may refer to the legendary counter-victory from a Persian base in Thrace into the north Pontic steppes against the Black Sea Scythians in 513/512 BC (Strab. VII 3,14). Another legendary victory by Dareios' generals took place at Zela in northern Anatolia against Saka invaders, who after conquering parts of Armenia had even raided and plundered Cappadocia. This night-battle is related by Strabo of Amaseia (Strab. XI 8.4-6; XV 3.15), but the date of this event is unknown.[153] At the place of the Persian victory a temple of the goddess Anaïtis and other Iranian gods was erected and a yearly celebrated festival, the Sakaean, for the inhabitants of Zela was established. Thematically the depicted battle scene of Tatarlı is remarkable for the Achaemenid imagery and apparently reveals an artistic tradition from a common model, like that executed in the relief scenes on the 4th century BC. Sidon sarcophagi, particularly on the "Mourning Woman Sarcophagus" *(Klagefrauensarkophag)*. In striking contrast to the Assyrian predecessors, where the king is predominantly involved in combat with his enemies or shown as a royal huntsman, such scenes were not chosen as central themes in the palatial art of Persepolis or other places.

A battle scene showing Scythians in their characteristic clothing has been connected with the famous epic poem 'Arimaspea' by Aristeas of Proconnesus.

Median clothing and equipment of weaponry mark the outward appearance of nomadic horse-riding peoples for the ancient Greeks and Iranian. The tall and pointed headgear is the most significant feature of the standard costume as also testified by Scythian or Saka funerals.[154]

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[152] Summerer 2007a, 24–28 in contrast excludes an association of the Tatarlı battle scene with any historical known historical military campaign of the Persians [+ see Summerer 2007b].

[153] Calmeyer 1992, 14.

[154] See the famous of three kneeling Scythian archers wearing the pointed headgear, who participated with the typical W-shaped bow in the hunting on the Kalydonian boar, depicted on the François vase from Chiusi in Museo Archaeologico, Florence 4209. The Attic black figure krater by the potter Ergotimos and the vase painter Klitias is dated to ca. 530 (570?) BC. In the inscription two of them are clearly designated as barbaric 'Kimerios' and 'Toxaris'. Schiltz 1994, 388–389, 392 fig. 314. [+ Here HH added "*Zitat Raeck 1981*", followed by the annotation: "*Noch nachtragen und zitieren*"].

The most impressive testimonies of this tall headgear, which signifies both ethnic identity and serves as a symbol of prestige, is preserved in the dress of a female mummy buried in ice kurgan 1 at Ak-Alacha 3 on the high plateau of Ukok in the Russian Altai.[155] The head-dress of the deceased is adorned with wooden figures of deer and ibexes covered with gold leaf in grave 6 of the necropolis Subexi III in Turfan District, Xinjiang. The Europid lady, perhaps a member of the Tocharians, lived at a time between the 5th and 3rd centuries BC. A similar model of tall, richly decorated head-gear with a golden figure of an ibex on its crest adorned the famous "Golden Man of Issyk", a nearly 18-year-old Saka chief in his splendid armour, who lived during the 5th century BC in the grass steppes of Semirechie, the 'Land of the Seven Rivers' in Southeast Kazakhstan. The Saka pointed cap tipped forward on the bronze figure of a warrior, found at Xinyuan in the upper Ili region of Xinjiang, finds its equivalent in felt from a warrior grave in kurgan 1 of Olon-Kurin-Gol 10 in Mongolian Altai.[156] The cap bears similar polychrome decoration with attached wooden horse figures like that of the Issyk warlord.

Khalchayan, a fortified Bactrian town with a citadel in the territory of ancient Saghāniyān in Bactria, which is located on the right bank of the Surkhan Darya near Denau in Uzbekistan, is famous for its small palace of the early Kuṣāṇa period (1st century BC).[157] Among the masterpieces of terracotta sculpture that form the friezes on its wall decoration, there are also male figures wearing "Scythian" headgear.[158] A cycle shows according to different authors a victorious battle between mounted bowmen of the Yüeh-chi against their rivals in Bactria, the heavily armoured Saka, who had settled earlier in Sogdiana and Bactria.[159]

The second group, the *Sakā haumavargā*, corresponds with the Saka Amyrgioi (Ἀμύργιοι Σάκαι), according to Herodotus (Hdt. VII 64): "The Sacae, or Skyths, were clad in trousers, and had on their heads tall stiff caps rising to a point. They bore the double curved-bow of their country and the dagger: besides which they carried the double-headed battle-axe, or *sagaris* as mentioned by Herodotus as their typical weapon. In the Apadana reliefs the delegation no. 17 is armed with this type of battle-axe and therefore identified as *Sakā haumavargā*. They were in truth Amyrgian Scythians, but the Persians called them Sacae, since that is the name they give to all Scythians". Their name, "the Sakā who drink the hauma" as mentioned in an inscription of Dareios I at Susa, is derived from the Iranian ritual drink *hauma*, which is also known as *haoma*, Indra's sacred drink, from the Avesta.[160] Representatives of this group appear among the throne bearers as no. 18P on the central building E and in the Hall of Hundred Columns M in Persepolis, but also besides their neighbours in the line of the 30 subjected peoples on the façade reliefs of the royal tombs of Naqš-i Rustam.[161] Both Saka tribes occur in the list of 24 peoples, corresponding to the delegations depicted on the Apadāna, as no. 12 in the inscription written in one ring in Egyptian hieroglyphs, but with only one bust on the statue of Dareios I from Susa.

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[155] Derevianko [Derevyanko] – Molodin 2000, 77–78 fig. 75.

[156] For a synopsis of the pointed headgear, see: Polos'mak 2001, 122 fig. 20. Molodin et al. 2008, 258 fig. 27. Parzinger – Molodin – Tseveendorzh [Tseveendorj] 2009, 213–214, fig. 19. See also the "west Iranian" bronze rein trimmings (strap crossings) in the shape of a sitting bearded Saka wearing the pointed cap tipped forward: Calmeyer 1985, 138–139 figs 10–11, pl. 50, 2–6.

[157] + See also Mode 2013.

[158] Pugachenkova 1971, 24–25, 128 fig. 19–20. Baumer 2014, 47 fig. 26 call the painted terracotta sculptures 'heads of Saka warriors.' According to Pugachenkova the figures resemble the representation of Attis and Mithras in Hellenistic art.

[159] Nehru 1999–2000, 219 and 2009, 193. The excavator Galina Anatolevna Pugachenkova (1971, 24–25, 128) explained the composition as a battle scene between the victorious Yüeh-chi / Yuezhi against heavily armoured Bactrians.

The first group, the *Sakā tigraxaudā*, had their pasture lands in the Trans-Caspian steppe between the Oxus (Amu-Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr-Darya) rivers, with the Aral Sea as northern border and the Polytimetos (Zaravsan) in the south. The *Sakā haumavargā*, perhaps the eastern neighbours of the *Sakā tigraxaudā*, had their nomadic homes east of the Jaxartes in the Pamir. The Alai Valley including Fergana with its fertile and wide grasslands has been considered as the "Amyrgian plain of the Sakā".[162] They were subdued by Dareios I in ca. 500 BC and after 493 BC formed an own satrapy.

3.4 "Swat Protohistoric Graves" or SPG[163]

To one of these tribal confederations belonged the *Sakaibiš tayai para Sugda,* the Saka who were beyond Sogdia, which Dareios regarded as part of his reign.

According to the textual evidence of Han Shu, there existed at least a fourth group of Saka, which should be differentiated from the Tigraxaudā and the Amyrgians. These easternmost pastoral nomads had their residence in the Ili Basin. The name 'Pamir Saka' might designate both eastern nomadic groups, the *Sakā haumavargā* and the Ili Basin Saka, known from the later Chinese records *Qian Han Shu* (1st century AD), in which they are called 'Sai' or 'Sai-wang'. As a result of tribal movements from the neighbourhood of China the Sai-wang were forced in ca. 160 BC by the Da Yüeh-chih federation of nomadic tribes to move southwest into Da Xia (Bactria).[164] The Da Yüeh-chih, the "Great children of the moon" according to the Chinese sources, moved from their homeland Kansu southwest of the Alan Shan uplands farther to the west and again expelled the Sai-wang from their new homelands in Bactria. The Chinese annals, however, do not give any clue to the route by which they entered this region. The stream of invasions was forced at last into another course, which brought the Pamir Saka beyond H'ien-tu or the "hanging passage", the mountain passes of the Hindukush, leading to the country of Jibin (Kashmir) and as far as into the Sapta-Sindhu land, the middle Indus region. The mention of the hanging passage seems also to indicate that a branch of the Saka possibly took the Kashmir route and settled somewhere between Kashmir and the Punjab region.

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[160] For the botanical identity of the plant (Vedic *soma*, Avestan *haoma*) as belonging to *Ephedra*, the source of ephedrine, a banned drug in modern sport, see: Parpola 2015, 107–108 [+ see also Falk 1989].

[161] Persepolis, Central building: no. 22, Hall of 100 Columns: E11, Palace of Artaxerxes: no. XXIII?, Darius' Palace: no. XI? after Roaf 1983, fig. 131. Naqš-i Rustam, tomb V and VI: Calmeyer 2009, 31, 37 no. 14 pl. 10,1; 14,5; 26,2.

[162] Herrmann 1938, 9–10, 146, 157; Junge 1939, 85–87; Litvinskij 1969, 124; P'iankov 1994, 37–39. The identification of the *Sakā haumavargā* with the Ἀμύργιοι has been rejected by Narain 1987, 30. [+ See also Francfort 2005].

[163] + See Narasinham et al. 2019; see also Micheli and Vidale 2015, but especially Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri eds 2015. Chronology of the Swat graveyards: 1200 and 800 BCE. This paragraph seems to be a bit 'intrusive' in the structure of the book at this point. However it has a very strong value, especially if considered in the light of the results of the largest genomic study ever conducted on ancient Eurasia (Narasinham et al. 2019), which were unknown to HH at that time. The concept of the paragraph looks like it was somehow influenced by what Tucci stated about the "Massagetae" (Tucci 1963a; 1977) and the following elaboration by Jettmar (Jettmar 1995; repr. 2002).

The penetration of nomadic tribal groups from Central Asia into the northwest of the Indian subcontinent as a long line of incursions seems to be traceable even during the second millennium BC. The emergence of the so-called "Gandhara Grave Culture Complex" or "Swat Protohistoric Graves has been explained by strong influences originating from beyond the Pamir and Hindukush-Karakorum barriers. One of the main routes of these groups across the Hindukush-Wakhan passes links the Chitral Valley across the Kalam path with the plains of the subcontinent. The archaeological evidence from Period V of the Swat sequence clearly shows "the probable intrusion of tribal groups of a northern extraction" during the end-2nd millennium BC in Swat. It comprises warrior graves with spear points and leaf-shaped arrowheads, horse-burials (of period V, VI and VII) with the characteristic horse-harnesses of specific steppic origin.[165] A three-holed iron cheekpiece of a snaffle from grave 142 in the cemetery at Timargarha in the Panjkora Valley in Dir District, found in a Period VII context, is characteristic for horse-harnesses in the Eurasian steppe-belt. Jettmar dated it tentatively to the 7th or 6th centuries BC, but this type of cheekpiece is testified even earlier, from the 9th or 8th century BC in tomb 15 of a noble horseman at Tepe Sialk near Kašan.[166] According to Rainer Michael Boehmer, this necropolis belongs to his phase Sialk B2, which is dated between 770/760–690/680 BC.[167] Corresponding cheekpieces in bronze and bone were found in kurgan 1 of Aržan, now assigned to the 9th – 8th century BC, which confirms the dating of the Timargarha iron piece already to the 8th century BC.[168] On the basis of the then still few relevant archaeological testimonies in Swat and Upper Indus, Giorgio Stacul stressed the intrusion of Central Asian tribes, "conventionally defined as Saka, whose presence, in a more or less corresponding epoch, seems testified in the valleys of Gilgit and Chitral".[169]

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[164] Herrmann 1938, 146; Junge 1939, 87; Lohuizen – de Leeuw 1949, 328; Chattopadhyaya 1967, 13; P'iankov 1994, 38–39.

[165] Stacul 1970, 99–100. Stacul 1975, 329 in contrary to Dani 1967 has rejected the label "Gandhara grave complex" as unsuitable. Dani's division of the graves of Timargarha into three phases "is not based on stratigraphic data, or on relative chronology of the graves". The different cultural aspects as a result of the long use of the graveyard "mark different successive cultures" [+ *contra* see above Narasinham 2019 etc.].

[166] Timargarha: Dani 1967, 82–83 pl. 50b, 2a–b. (Grave 142 is described by A. Rahman, see: Dani 1967, 82–83 pl. 14a–b). Jettmar 1967b, 207. This comparison was seen also by Müller-Karpe 1983, 76 fig. 32,10 and Dittmann 1984, 187 footnote 83, fig. 8,8. The cheek-piece from Tepe Sialk is depicted in Ghirshman 1939, 588, 835, 841 pl. 56.

In spite of several stratigraphical excavations in Iron Age settlements it is still controversial to identify an Achaemenid horizon in the region known as the satrapy Gadara between the late 6th century to the Macedonian occupation. This period is marked by a pottery known as 'red burnished ware', but until now no archaeological artifacts have been identified that would show a distinct Achaemenid influence. Besides some Achaemenid coins there is only one Aramaic inscription of Priyadarsi. A sequence covering the whole Iron Age occupation was submitted by Mortimer Wheeler's excavations of 1958 in the large mound of Bala Hisar at Charsada in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.[170] Reinhard Dittmann has summarized the problematics.[171] The small golden stag with ramified antler used as brooch, from Jhangi near Dhamtaur in Hazara District and now kept in the Peshawar Museum, has been also considered as evidence for Saka presence.[172] The same museum preserves a golden bracelet showing a frieze of attacking lions with bent body, produced in elaborate openwork with the significant inlay in the *en cabochon* technique; it has been assigned to a Scytho-Saka workshop. An analogy is preserved in Cologne. Nevertheless, as long as the provenance of these artworks is obscure, the bracelets cannot be seen as testimonies of the Eurasian animal style with obvious Sarmatian inspiration in historical Northwest India.[173] A relief on a stone slab found in the village Salad on the Dādhar River in the Baroda division of Gujarat has been described as an example of Scythian art. Two fabulous animals flank "The Tree of Life", a central motif of Mesopotamian and Iranian art. The composition shows elements that remind of Assyrian or Iranian panels, but the animals with a horn ending in a volute clearly reveal local elements.[174]

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[167] Boehmer 1965, 822.

[168] Grjaznov 1984, 66 fig. 30, 20–26, 28–36. For a new dating of kurgan Aržan 1, see: Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2010, 305, 318. See also Teufer 2013, 17 footnote 217.

[169] Stacul 1970, 101.

[170] Wheeler 1962.

[171] Dittmann 1984 [+ Here HH added "Teufer 2013". See on Dittman's view and on the related chronological issues of Swat protohistory: Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri eds 2015, Olivieri et al. 2019, Olivieri – Iori 2019. See also Olivieri – Iori 2021a].

[172] Stag figure from Jhangi (Dhamtaur) near Abottabad in Hazara (H. 6 cm): Thiele (ed.) 1962, no. 288. Allchin – Allchin 1968, 150 and 1982, 241 date this surface find to the 8th / 7th century BC. Jaffar 1969. Jettmar 2002, 101 saw reminiscences to similar, but earlier figures from the Caucasus at sites such as Talyche, Samthavro, Lankoran, where they date from c. 1450 to 1200 BC. – The golden ram figure from "Dhamtaur" mentioned by Dar 1988, 37 and again by Dar 2006, 46, 156, 220 pl. 67 actually depicts the famous golden figure of a standing ram from inhumation 4 at Tillya Tepe in northern Afghanistan (2nd quarter of 1st century BC). It formed the part of a high head-gear as seen in the Saka princely grave 2 of Aržan in Tuva, in the kurgan of Ak-Alakha in the Altai or in the later Sarmatian diadem of Novočerkask: Sarianidi 1985, 242 fig. 112–120.; 1986, 302 with figure p. 309. Schiltz 2008, 270 fig. 108. For archaeological traces of the Saka, see also: Vogelsang 1992a, 252–254.

3.5 Rock carvings in Eurasian Animal Style [Tables 11.1–12.2]

This first wave of Iranian-speaking nomadic or semi-nomadic groups that penetrated from Central Asia across the mountain barriers of Hindukush and Karakorum into the upper course of the Indus River from Kohistan up to Ladakh is indicated by the depiction of ungulate animals, such as red deer or ibexes which seem to be "standing on tip-toes" *(Fußspitzengang)*.[175] Such images found in the Diamer District and in Ladakh are frequent during the Early Iron age,[176] the Maiemir-Kurtu phase, from the Altai in South Siberia, Mongolia as far as Southeast Kazakhstan and Qobustan in Azerbaijan. Close to one of the most important rock art complexes of the Altai in South Siberia with its rich Bronze Age zoomorphic imagery, Kalbakh Tash I, a large stag is "executed in a Pazyryk period style".[177] Wild ungulates with straightened legs also appear in the rock art of Upper Tibet.[178] This distinct motif in which the deer stands on the tips of their hoofs, as if floating in the air, is seen on the so-called stag-stones of the Sayan-Altai type, such as the two earliest examples from the kurgans 1 and 2 at Aržan in Tuva, whose construction comprise the Early Scythian period.[179] Stone slabs show engravings of ungulates such as stag, ibex, horse, elk, camel and wild boar in the same strange pose. They apparently were reused as spolia in kurgan 2 and therefore may belong to the earlier phase.[180] Kurgan Aržan 1 can be assigned to its earlier phase and is therefore dated to the transition from the late 9th to the 8th century BC. Kurgan 2 which was excavated between 2000 and 2002 belongs to the later phase, which is circumscribed as Aldy Bel'stage in Tuva. An exact dating of burial 5 to the late 7th century BC was made possible by dendrochronological analysis.[181]

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[173] Thiele (ed.) 1962, no. 289. The analogous specimen is kept in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum at Cologne. Both bracelets are mentioned also by Jettmar 1991a, 13 and dated to the 2nd century BC.

[174] + Here HH added "(Goetz 1953)".

[175] Jettmar 1984b, 75 figs 2, 4, 11. Jettmar 1991a, 5 fig. 4, pl. 4; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 54–55 no. 2.

[176] Ladakh: Francfort – Klodzinski – Mascle 1990, 13–16. Vohra 2005a, 25. – Mongolia: Jang 2009, 339 fig. 216 [+ I could not find this reference]. Sanghinot, Bayan Hongor aimag: Derevianko [Derevyanko] – Olsen 1998, 124 fig. 184–185. – Barsučij Log in Chakassia: Kovaleva 2010, 265 fig. 153; 266 fig. 155; 164–165 fig. 164.

[177] Kubarev – Jacobson 1996, 45 fig. 660.

[178] Bellezza 2008, 192–193 figs 293, 338.

[179] Aržan 1: The stag-stones were dated by Grjaznov 1980, 54–55 fig. 29 and Grjaznov 1984, 73–74 fig. 29 not later than the 7th century BC. Kossack 1984, 41 fig. 1,4. – Aržan 2: Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2010, 125–127 fig. 110.

[180] Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2010, 129–140 figs 112–119, 121, 123.

The single symbolic animal is found also on ornamental metalwork dating back to the same Early Scythian phase.[182] The bronze mirror of this early phase from Ust'-Bukhtarma in the Western Altai region is decorated by five raised-outline figures of stags and one of a mountain goat, with their stretched legs ending in pointed hoofs, arranged around the handle.[183] The same typical pose of deer with their heads turned up is also seen in an early Saka bronze from kurgan 41 at Ujgarak, a barrow cemetery near the delta of River Syr-Darja (Jaxartes), and a stag-shaped finial from Mongolia.[184] All of these images are connected by a significant stylistic element, which is spread throughout a vast region along the "great steppe road of Eurasia",[185] from Ordos, through Mongolia, Sayan Altai to Kazakhstan, and to the west to the Caucasus and the North Pontic region, but this element was also introduced via the Karakorum routes to the south into the Upper Indus valley. This motif obviously is characteristic for the early Scythian period and appears only sporadically after the 5th century BC. It symbolizes the wide expansion not only of new artistic ideas, but also of Central Asian political and social organization forms during the 9th century BC.

The motif of ungulates with straightened legs may render a bounding or flying movement, but their abnormal posture has been explained also as representing sacrificial animals. The abnormal posture is seen on a display hatchet (splendorous axe or *Prunkaxt*) or in a composition on the rhyton from the early Scythian Kelermes kurgan showing a stag hanging from a tree branch or a sheep in the tallons of (attacked by) an eagle on a golden sheet from Seven Brother's barrows no. 4 in the Kuban.[186]

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[181] Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2003, 2006, 2010, 160–176.

[182] Sher 1980, 246 fig. 121. Novgorodova 1980, 131; Parzinger 2006, 588. See also the representation of a stag from the golden head-gear and of other animals with stretched legs on gold objects from Aržan kurgan 2 (late 7th century BC): Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2003, 152 fig. 40; 2006, 114 pl. 5 and 137 pl. 78 [+ here HH added this side note: "*stone slab zu fn. 180*"]; 2010, 30 pl. 1,1 and 33,1.

[183] Mirror type 1 with rim and a central loop knob: Kubarev 1996, 320 fig. 1, 5; 2002, 64, 69 fig. 1, 6. Kossack 1984, 75 fig. 24, 14. Aruz et al. 2000, no. 169. Marsadolov 2002, 225 fig.; Parzinger 2006, 588 fig. 193, 13.

[184] Ujgarak (kurgan 41) was assigned by the excavator O. A. Vishnevskaya 1973, 34–35, fig. 22, pl. 14, 1–3,6,7; 28, 14 to the early group of kurgans, dating to 7th – 6th century BC): Litvinskij 1984, 122 fig. 32C8. Parzinger 2006, 668–670 fig. 219, 28. Mongolia (?): Artamonov 1970, 105 no. 142. Aruz et al. 2000, no. 198. An awl case from Northeast China (8th – 7th century BC) depicts lines of four stags following a doe. The deer "stand on the tops of their hooves" in the same pose: Bunker et al. 1997, no. 70.

[185] Členova 1994, 508 fig. 12; Marsadolov 2002.

[186] Artanomov 1970, pl. 15 and 118.

Other carvings showing ibexes and a few examples of stags of elaborate design and high artistic quality represent heraldic symbols, which can be connected with the nomadic art of the early Scytho-Saka nomads, who also crossed the mountains along the Indus via Ladakh. According to Chinese sources of the Western Han Dynasty, a later invasion had taken place long before the famous great exodus of the Saka from their pastures into Bactria (Seistan), Gandhara and perhaps Kashmir in the 2nd century BC – after they had been defeated by the Ta Yüeh-chih, who themselves had been subjected in (North)Western China to the Xiongnu, the Huns.[187]

Among the petroglyphs with the single depiction of symbolic animals that indicate the rank of a person of status, clan or a tribe, there are also a few pictorial narrative scenes. At Chilas-Jayachand there is an ibex being chased by a cat-like predator – perhaps a snow leopard *(uncia uncia)*, with its typical long bushy tail, the body decorated by volutes. Below the scene is a curled-up animal without legs, rather resembling a snake or fish than a caterpillar.[188] Jettmar connected this motif with one of the most prominent semiotic symbols in Eurasian Animal Art, the famous animals coiled into a ring *(Rolltier)*. However, this motif displays stylistic traits that derive from zoomorphic bridle ornaments of Western Zhou (11th century – 771 BC).[189] The earliest Scytho-Siberian example dating to the 8th – 7th centuries BC is provided by a bronze harness ornament in the shape of a curled-up feline, again from Aržan kurgan 2.[190] The Siberian and Central Asian bridle ornaments in the shape of coiled animals as found in Aržan and Ujgarak kurgan 33 apparently had already achieved more linear traits of stylisation. On the contrary, the golden pommel in the shape of a coiled animal from the Ziwiye treasure in Iranian Kurdistan displays a more realistic representation of the animal body.[191] The motif was transferred to Ciscaucasia and Crimea, where it served also as the chape of an *akinakes* from Stepnoe estate or the discoidal terminal of a mirror handle from Kelermes.

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[187] Herrmann 1938, 146–147; Hulsewé 1979, 1979, 144.

[188] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13–14, pl. 6; 1991a, 5–6 pl. 4; MANP 6, 2003, no. 69:1–3. Jettmar 1989b, 179 referring to the carving of a fish at Rutog, forming a circle, takes also this interpretation of the enrolled animal of Chilas in consideration.

[189] Jettmar 1972b, 237–238 fig. 4. Kossack 1980, 100; 1984.

[190] Aržan (8th – 7th century BC): Schiltz 1994, 250 figs 7, 52, 189. – Kurgan 33 at Ujgarak, Kazakhstan (7th – 6th century BC): Vishnevskaya 1973, 28–29, 107 pl. 9, 15–16; 28, 6–7. Curled up panther on a ring from kurgan 5 in the Tšilik Valley, Eastern Kazakhstan (7th – 6th century BC): Akishev – Akishev 1983, 58–59. – Horse bridle ornament in the shape of a carnivore (wolf) from Kulakovskogo kurgan 2 near Simferopol, Crimea (5th century BC): Artamonov 1970, 32 pl. 78. Galalina – Gratsch 1986, fig. 61. Paws and tail end in the figure of a billy goat, heads of an elk or of birds. See also Kossack 1984, 43, 75 fig. 2. Kelermes Kurgan 2, region Krasnodar (late 7th – early 6th century BC): Galanina – Gratsch 1986, fig. 6. Temir Gora, Crimea (mid-7th century BC), Galanina – Gratsch 1986, 18 fig. 7. Rolled lion from Ak-Burun kurgan 5, Crimea (5th century BC): Galanina – Gratsch 1986, fig. 92. For the development of the curled animal motif see an overview by Bogdanov 2007, 205 fig. 2.

[191] Ghirshman 1964a, 116–118 fig. 158.

The motif of the animal chase is characteristic for this period in the rock art and is known from the ‘altar rock’ at Thalpan. The delicate carving there shows an ibex followed by a beast of prey with two long tails ending in scrolls.[192] The shoulder of the ibex is decorated with a spiral hook. Both features are also known from the decoration of the narrative bronzes in China such as the double tail (known also from animal images Mostar Nala 166:3), and from Central Asian rock carvings such as the volutes (see also: stag stones). The scene of a beast of prey attacking a goat appears in a “Saka carving” in a canyon of the Eškiol’mes ridge in Southeast Kazakhstan.[193] Similar scenes of ungulate animals being chased by carnivores occur also at sites like Rwa-‘brog ‘phrang and bShag-bsangs in Upper Tibet.[194] The peculiar feature of the predator or other animals with a double tail is also known from Chilas IV, Thor North, and Dadam Das [Table 11.2], and is present in the drawing of an animal at Kalbak Taš in the Altai.[195]

Other images of an ibex or a crouching (recumbent) feline with their legs ending in ring-shaped paws have prototypes in bronzes from the Ordos desert, a group that is generally associated with the Xiongnu of the third to 1st century BC, or in objects from the Pamir as well as the Pontus region.[196] Like the ibex, the wild goat is a typical motif in the art of the eastern steppes, while the stag seems to be more representative for the western art of the Scythians. There are only few examples along the Upper Indus that clearly show images of the stag itself. The striking lack of images depicting stag and roe deer has been explained by the assumption that this kind of game did not live in this part of the mountain region. “Immigrants might have remembered animals which they had seen elsewhere”.[197] This explanation is, however, in contrast to the occurrence of the stag in Kashmir and Tibet, migrating there over vast mountain areas. One specimen is even reported to have been hunted around the Burzil Pass, and ibex- and stag-hunting is known also in the high Harban Valley.[198] Yet, there are few unambiguous depictions of the stag dating to an early prehistoric phase from Ba Das (no. 15:2, 32:4, 64:1). This game may not have had the same symbolic importance for the hunter in the Indus region like the ibex or makhor. Among the few images of this phase that clearly depict a stag is a singular engraving from Thalpan designed with volutes filling the body.[199]

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[192] This scene has been dated by Jettmar to the Kuṣāṇa period (1st – 3rd century AD): Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 14. Jettmar 1991a, 7 pl. 6 (the chased animal is designated here as a stag). MANP 6, no. 230, 231 (the animal no. 231 is called an ibex).

[193] Baipakov – Maryashev [Mar’jačev] – Potapov – Goryachev 2005, 99 fig. 218.

[194] Bellezza 2001, Bellezza 2002, 139; Bellezza 2008, 171 fig. 296.

[195] Chilas IV, Thor North, and Dadam Das: MANP 5, 2005, 27 fig. 19–22 and no. 85:4. Kalbak Taš: [+ HH left here an incomplete reference: “Kubarev 20, fig. 6, 1”, to be integrated probably as Kubarev – Kubarev 2013].

[196] Pectoral ornaments from northern Hebei and western Liaoning (6th – 5th century BC): Bunker et al. 1997, no. 111–113. Bunker 2002, no. 157.

[197] Jettmar 2002, 91.

[198] Roberts 1997, 175. See also [Bandini-] König 1944, 101–104 and Frembgen 2013b, 43.

The main symbolic animal[200] as the most common motif in the animal style art, whose totemistic or heraldic function has been claimed for tribal identity, was also found at Obo Uzu near Thalpan.[201] The animal is shown in profile facing left in the typical pose with legs folded under the body. This pose revealing defeat discloses also a sense of compactness as well as dynamism. Similarly, it appears in Central Asian rock art and in the Qobustan caves.[202] The motif is also common on the bronze plaques of an elk of the Tagar II culture (Šurovka), as seen in the golden shield emblems such as the famous recumbent stag from Kurgan Kostromskaya Stanitsa in Krasnodar District (7th century BC), and in the later stylised example from Kurgan Kul'Oba (5th century BC) near Kertch in the Kuban,[203] or in a quiver plate from Kurgan 5 in the Tšilik Valley in Eastern Kazakhstan (7th – 6th century BC).[204] In the Scytho-Saka sphere the stag was venerated as symbol of the sun, the natural cycle from birth to death.

Characteristic S-volutes as ornamental embellishments of the body occur in a group of carvings in Ladakh and on the high plateau of Upper Tibet. In terms of style and characteristic decoration this Tibetan group reveals obvious affinities to petroglyphs showing cervids and caprids of the Eurasian animal style in Ladakh. They seem to reflect symbolic signs found on bronzes from the beginning of the Western Zhou period in China, i.e., dating from the 11th to 9th century BC.[205] In west Tibetan rock art clusters the design of deer, antilope, wild sheep and wild yaks is executed in a curvilinear or S-shaped schema, and the body is adorned by a double volute. In Ru-thog County of northern Tibet there are at least nine sites displaying ca. 50 examples of ungulates with the S-shaped motif or scroll design within their body and long curvilinear horns. This assemblage of animal images with an elaborate volute adornment forms a significant group of rock art in the Tibetan high plateau.[206] A group of petroglyphs at Tamgaly in Kazakhstan are carved in the Saka animal style. There is an elaborate image of a deer with a spiral filling the body.[207] Sajmaly Taš in the Pamir reveals similar decorated animal carvings.[208]

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[199] MANP 9, 2009, no. 502:29. There are few other engravings of stags showing features of the animal style from Dadam Das (MANP 5, 2005, no. 21:10) and Minar Gah ([Bandini-] König 1994, 101–108 fig. 51).

[200] + Here HH added a double question mark ("??").

[201] Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 54–55 no. 1; MANP 6, 2003, no. 30: 379.

[202] Eškiol'mes: Sala – Deom 2005, 56 fig. 4,7. In Qobustan (i.e. "land of ravines", 60 km south of Baku, Azerbaijan): Rüstəmov 1991, fig. 5. Rüstəmov 1994, fig. 9 r. Rüstəmov [– Muradova] 2003, 21 fig. 14.

[203] Artamonov 1970, 29 pl. 62–63 (Kostromskaja St. 1st half of 6th century BC) and 73 pl. 264–265 (Kul Oba: 4th century BC). Schiltz 1994, 87, 158 figs 5, 62, 159 (Kostromskaja St.: 7th century BC), 118–119 figs 116–117 (Kul'Oba: 5th century BC). See also the reliefs of recumbent stags on a hatchet and gorytus from the Kelermes barrows: Artamonov 1970, 20–21 pl. 10, 12–15, 21. Schiltz 1994, 101 figs 73, 75, 320, and on bridle plaques from Kurgan 4 at Žurovka on the middle Dnjepr: Artamonov 1970, 40 figs 63, 130, Schiltz 1994, fig. 21. Minusinsk: Schiltz 1994, 257 fig. 191.

[204] Chiliktinskaya Valley: Akishev – Akishev 1983, 37 with figs p. 52–53. Schiltz 1994, 293 fig. 219 (7th – 6th century BC). See also a bronze "fitting in reindeer form" from the K. Ishigiro Collection, Tokyo, with a typical dealer's indication of origin "Ordos": Middle Eastern Culture Centre 1993, no. 421.

[205] Ladakh (Zanskar): Francfort – Klodzinski – Mascle 1990, 18 figs 20–23. Francfort 1994, 41 fig. 8. Vohra 2005a, 26. – Tibet: Bellezza 2008, 171 figs 293–296 and 191 figs 358–359. Spirals as infills on carvings of goats at Eškiol'mes: Bairakov – Maryashev [Mar'jačev] – Potapov – Goryachev 2005: fig. 189. A flat openwork plaque from Southern Siberia in the form of a mountain goat, 6th – 5th century BC, shows the same S-volute embellishment, similar to the cutout leather animals

A number of bronze plaques depicting ibexes, stags, and horses that show the same abstract rendering of the body as in the carvings come from severely plundered graveyards in the Northern Areas.[209] These images of animals have their direct counterparts in the early nomadic art of Central Asia, Siberia and the Volga region. A bronze plaque in the shape of an ibex, acquired by Jettmar in the Kandia Valley in Indus Kohistan, is another indication of a direct connection between the Upper Indus and the animal style of the Central Asian steppe belt. The body of the animal is designed as an S-spiral in relief with two blank fields in it. Added to the horns of the recumbent ibex is the head of a monal pheasant *(Lophophorus impeyanus).* The bird with its typical crown of feathers occurs in the local fauna of the Upper Indus and until recent times was considered pure and sacred to the Dards in their game rituals; it played also a role for the Kalash head-hunters.[210] Direct parallels were seen in bronzes of the Saka animal art from kurgan 3 at Tegerman-su, kurgan 3 at Akbeit, and the graveyard at Pamirskaja I in Eastern Pamir,[211] but without the combination of animal and bird. This feature combining a fantastic, mythical creature and a bird is recognized even on a belt plaque of the Scytho-Siberian animal style found in the Lake Baikal area or Mongolia.[212] The special motif is rendered in Pazyryk by a stag-like animal head, whose horns are tipped by bird heads.[213] The antlers and the tail of the horse-like animal terminate on bird's heads in composite figures of the unique Filippovka

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at Tuekta I in central Altai (Jettmar 1964, 124 fig. 105): Markoe – Moorey – Bunker – Porada 1981, no. 821. See also the raised spirals on the shoulders and rumps of horses and does decorating a short sword from northeastern China (7th – 6th century BC) and of an ibex figure: Bunker 2002, no. 45 and 174.

[206] For example in Rwa ʻbrog ʻphrang in Rhu-thog county: Bellezza 2001, 212–214 footnote 27, figs 10.54–57. Upper Tibet: Bellezza 2002, 136–139 figs XI-9d, 10d, 13d and XI-3h, 1i, 2i. Bellezza 2008, 191.

[207] Rogozhinsky 2011, 199 fig. 160.

[208] Бернштам 1997, 398 fig. 8.

[209] Dani 2001, 432–438 pl. 55, 3.4; pl. 56, 3 (from Tangir Valley).

[210] Karachi, National Museum: Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, pl. 7; Jettmar 1991a, 6 pl. 3; 1999b, 64–65 fig. 1; 2002, 99 fig. 25.

[211] Jettmar 1975, 66. 181. 217. 426; 1991a, 6 figs 5–7; 2002, 99. Litvinskij 1984, 52 fig. 12, 6; 1989, 31; 1993, 145–146 figs 8–10. The worship of the monal pheasant by the Dards and its importance for the Kalash headhunters is mentioned also by Jettmar 1960b, 131.

[212] Aruz et al. 2000, 7, 26 no. 210.

[213] Rudenko 1970, pl. 142.

stags with their flamboyant bird-tipped antlers (Late Sauromatian or Early Sarmatian Kurgan 1 dated to the late-5th to early-4th century BC). This combination of the stag's antlers (bird-head-topped antlers) with attached bird heads is repeated on the golden plaques from the kurgan of Ak-Metchet in the Crimea or on the bridle ornament from the Seven Brothers barrow 4 in the Krasnodar District.[214] The paws and tail of a coiled wolf forming an openwork plaque from Kulakovskogo kurgan on Crimea (5th century BC) end in the figure of a wild goat, in an elk's head and the heads of birds of prey.[215] A round bronze belt buckle of Scythian style from Nargizava in Agsu District, Azerbaijan, shows a deer figure with large antlers within the circle.[216] Its backward-turned head faces a bird sitting on its back. The feature with the horns of a crouching beast tipped by bird heads in the depiction of an animal fight on a belt-plaque, found in a Western Han princely burial of the 2nd century BC, is apparently borrowed from Scythian imagery.[217] The bird or only its head represents a common motif in Scythian art, sometimes also in combination with stags or single antlers. In all regions of Scythian art both the deer and the bird of prey belong to the most important and widespread symbols.[218]

There are few carvings along the Upper Indus that can be clearly identified as deer, which are not native between Karakorum and Himalaya. The picture of an ungulate from Thalpan shows all characteristics of a stag with long ramified antlers.[219] The body with signs of abstraction renders the characteristic embellishment of the body by scrolls as known from Central Asian rock art, even though the elegant design full of verve that is so typical for the Animal Style is missing. At the small rock carving site of Turil Nala, which belongs to a small ancient settlement consisting of several round stone structures, a boulder shows an exceptional drawing of a stag with exaggerated "flaming" antlers. They are reminiscent of the 26 golden deer figures from the Filippovka chieftain's Kurgan 1, which is located at the foothills of the Ural Mountains on the east bank of the Ural River, 60 miles southwest of Orenburg in Central Russia, the region of the mysterious Issedones.[220]

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[214] Ak Metchet: Artamonov 1970, 31 pl. 72, from the same kurgan also a golden plaque in the shape of a bird's head: op.cit. 31 pl. 70. Galanina – Gratsch 1986, fig. 101. Seven Brothers: Artamonov 40 fig. 64. A pole-top from the kurgan 2 at Ulski Aul is shaped as s monumental representation of a bird's head with the smaller relief of a recumbent goat, op.cit. pl. 58. There are numerous ornaments of birds or its heads, sometimes in combination with images of stags or their mere antlers and of other animals, op.cit. 19, 21, 40 fig. 31 (Šurovka), fig. 65, pl. 129 (Seven Brothers).

[215] Galanina – Gratsch 1986, fig. 61. Kossack 1984 [+ = HH quoted the 1998 English version], 44 fig. 2,7.

[216] The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Baku: Valikhanly 2012, 28, 63 with photo.

[217] Shizishan at Xuzhou, Jiansu Province: Rawson 2002, 27–28 fig. 4.

[218] A comprehensive study of both motifes is owed Schneider – Zazoff 1994, 187–202.

[219] Stag of so-called "retarded animal style": Jettmar 1989b, 268 fig. 82; 1991a, 8 fig. 9. MANP 9, 2009, no. 502: 29.

[220] Aruz et al. 2000, 26–27. A golden "plaque in the shape of a reindeer" from the K. Ishiguro Collection, Tokyo, shows similar exaggerated antlers: Middle Eastern Culture Centre 1993, no. 146 (indicating Azerbaijan as dubious origin).

In contrast to the Upper Indus region the animal preferably depicted in the Pamirs is the stag. The preference of the ibex as a sacral or totemistic animal symbol south of the Hindukush might be based on local beliefs, as they are still alive among the Dards of the Gilgit region or among the Kalasha of Chitral.[221] The ibex is thought to be the "incarnation (embodiment) of a pure and sacred being in an animalistic sphere" or the companion of the *peri* (fairies). Therefore, the fairy has to show a hunter in his dream the mountain where he can find the game. In Hunza the *peri* are said to live in their own sacred domains, which are in the upland pastures and the high mountain peaks beyond. They "favour goats, because these animals resemble or originate from the ibex and markhor, the livestock of the mountain spirits".[222] The shadow of the fairies, called *raaci*, falls upon the goats. They remain "during the grazing season on high mountain meadows under the protection and influence of the *peri*." [223] Therefore the shepherds can safely guard his flock of goats in the mountain pastures.

Around Gilgit, in Punial and in the Haramosh Valley, a local goddess of pre-Islamic times called *Murkhum* was worshipped as the mistress of all mountain goats.[224] As a goddess for women, a Dardic Artemis, she gives fertility to both humans and animals and protects women in childbirth as well as hunters. In 1958 Jettmar was even able to visit a local sanctuary in a grove of junipers and walnut-trees, the holy trees of the Dards, just below the majestic Haramosh peak near Guré, the summer village of Barche. Once a year the women gather there around a stone altar on benches of stones, which is adorned with the horns of ibexes.[225] The *zhabán*, the priest of Murkhum, the only man allowed to attend to the ceremony, sacrifices a nanny-ibex, which was sent by the goddess. After the ritual slaughter, he hangs the horns on the branches of the sacred tree. The goddess can appear as a female apparition or as a nanny-goat, and her companions are peris. In her spirit world man and wild goat are regarded as 'doubles'. As domestic animal the goat is likewise considered as pure as ibex and markhor, which are collectively called *mayaro*. Similar ceremonies against childlessness were performed at a stone altar at Barmas near Gilgit, which was connected with the female goddess *Mulkum*.[226]

Similar sanctuaries, where tutelary goddesses have been adored, are reported from different places in the Gilgit region: In Astor near the village of Naugām at the foot of the Nagishi Mountain a stone altar for the local goddess *Nagi Suchemi* was still in use during the 19th century, where for her worship nanny-goats were slaughtered. Ghulam Muhammad also refers to a sanctuary at the hamlet Shikang near Gudai in Astor, which was dedicated to *Sri Kun*, a sister of Nagi Suchemi. The inhabitants made a sacrifice of a goat, thus begging for blessing and welfare.[227]

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[221] Litvinskij 2002, 129; 2003, 56–57.

[222] Sidky 1994, 73.

[223] Stellrecht 1991, 127.

[224] Jettmar 1961a, 88–91; 1965, 110–111; 2002, 5–6, 198. Litvinskij 2003, 58–59.

[225] Jettmar 1958, 253; 1960b, 124, 131; 1961a, 88–89; 1975, 209–211 fig. 3; 1985a, 769 fig. 16 (with photo of the altar built of heaped-up rocks).

[226] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 109.

A corresponding rite has been noted by Vigne in the Duru Valley between Rondu and Haramosh. There is "a building containing a wooden altar, four feet high, with a tabular surface of two feet in diameter, called Micho". For fear of the Deyu, the worshippers never drink cows' milk. "On a particular day they burn goats' fat and juniper-branches upon the altar, and dance, sing and drink wine, and eat the meat of the wild goat".[228]

Goat symbolism is a common feature of the Kalasha religious culture.[229] The goddess Krumai around the sacred mountain Tirich Mir, where at a shrine goats are sacrified to gods and fairies, even takes on the shape of a goat.[230] The image of this animal is a dominant motif in the carved or painted decoration of houses and clan sanctuaries. As sacred animals they are offered to Kalasha deities. In the symbolic world they together with the wild markhor and the juniper tree(?) belong to the pure-male domain of the mountains, whereas sheep and cattle as impure animals are combined with the female sphere of the lower valley. Kalasha sanctuaries such as the legendary temple of Imra (Mara), the temple of Mahandeu in Afghan Kafiristan, played an eminent role in the Kalasha cosmology, which has been described by George S. Robertson.[231] In the pre-Islamic pantheon of North and Central Kafiristan, the deity Imra as known from the region of the Kati and Mari in Prasun occupies the highest position. He created the other gods, and also the fairies and demons.

3.6 Ritual metal vessels from Imit in Ishkoman

The element of the ibex as a pure and sacred symbol, refers to another group of remarkable metal finds which were discovered already in 1940 at Adrach of Garm Chashma in the southwest of Imit on the left bank of Karumbar River, the eastern affluent of the Gilgit River in Ishkoman. The objects were found together, but there is no proof that they originated from the same archaeological complex. They were briefly published by Stein and have been kept since 1954 in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. The "hoard" consists of a small spherical copper cauldron with two horizontal ring handles and an attached protome in the shape of a horse's head and a remarkable rhyton with the lower part in the shape of a centaur.[232]

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[227] Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 103, 111. The worship of *Nagi Suchemi* was still in 1971 remembered by locals, see Jettmar 1975, 208–209.

[228] Vigne 1844, vol. II, 305.

[229] Parkes 1987, 645–649.

[230] Robertson 1896, 384.

[231] Robertson 1896, 389–392. See also Jettmar 1975, 66–70 and Parkes 1991.

[232] Since 1954 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: Stein 1944, 14–16 pl. 3; Jettmar 1979a, 921–925 figs 5,1 and 6; Jettmar 1991a, 1–2 figs 1 and 10 fig. 14. Jettmar 2002, 99–100. Errington – Cribb 1992, 88–90 no. 95, 96. Jäger 2006, 203–204 fig. 41.

Boris A. Litvinskij is owed the recognition that the cauldron has its counterparts in the Pamirs, and therefore both vessels are testimonies for the movement of Saka tribes from the Pamir to the Northern Areas. The passage across the Baroghil Pass through the Gilgit Basin and along the Indus River to India was one of the routes of the Pamir Saka. They joined their other tribesmen, who had made their arduous migration via Bactria, present-day Afghanistan, traversing the passes of the Western Hindukush.

The bowl belongs to a significant type of Scythian cast bronze cauldron, often with animals attached vertically to the wall. The best parallels have been seen in Central Asian cauldrons from kurgan 3 in the cemetery of Aličur II, from kurgan 1, 3 and 5 in the cemetery Charguš, and from Poršnev in the Pamirs, as well as from the Volga Region, dating to the 5th to 3rd century BC.[233] Moreover, the shape of the body, the attachment of the handles and the design of the false spout of the Imit cauldron find direct equivalents in the Aličur vessel. B. A. Litvinskij on the basis of comparisons with similar cauldrons from Siberia sought the origin of this ritual vessel in a region comprising South Siberia, Altai and Semirec'e, but assumed that the Imit cauldron was manufactured in Pamir.[234] Jurij Demidenko and Kirill Firsov assigned these nomad bronze kettles to their variant 5 and saw their production centre in the Seven Stream land, the Semirec'e, from where it was distributed to the Lower Volga, the Pamir Mountains and South Siberia.[235] This type of nomad kettle seems to have played a part in religious ceremonies during funerals of noble persons of the Tagar Culture.

The other composite vessel shows a high horn made of hammered copper sitting upon a centaur figure standing on four legs of leaded bronze. The human forepart of the creature holds between the hands an excellent modelled goat, fastened by a pin, so that it can swing back and forth when the vessel is moved. Stein and later authors associated the figure with one of the most enigmatic hybrid beings of the classical world, the *kentauros* of Greek mythology. The connection of the Imit centaur with a goat, the sacred animal of the high mountains and companion of the *paris*, gives rise to another supposition. The Indian epic Mahābhārata, which provides insight into the early history of the Indian world, the period of the first half of the first millennium BC, tells of the *kinnaras* living in the Himalayas, heavenly beings that are part human and part horse. They are sometimes also believed to belong to the *gandharva*, a kind of sky-dwelling deity, who is the wife of the *apsarās*, a female minor divinity. The *apsarāsas* with their partners inhabit the sky. On the monumental Buddha relief of Manthal in Baltistan two or three of them are depicted above the central scene with the meditating Buddha and the two standing Bodhisattvas.

Rhyta of the classical shape with the forepart of an animal are known from Kurgan 1 at Jasil'kul II, the Seven Brother barrows, from Kurgan 4 at Uljap in the Krasnodar district of the Adyge Republic, in Nisa near Aškabad in South Turkmenistan or in Demavend in western Iran. They represent an Iranian form which was also adopted by Greek metal artisans.[236] Rhyta with the forepart in the shape of a centaur were widespread during the Seleucid area and in general use in the Parthian world and in other parts of Central Asia. A whole group of these ceremonial drinking horns are amongst a unique collection of ca. 40 carved ivory ritual vessels found in 1948 in room XI of the square house belonging to the north complex in the fortress of Old Nisa (Parthaunisa), which is situated at the northern foot of the Kopet-Dagh near Aškabad. It was the capital of the Parthyene, the seat of the Arsacid Dynasty of the Parthian empire. The treasury, designated 'rhyton room', belonged to the residence originally called 'Mithradatkirt', founded by the Arsacid great king Mithradates I (171–138 BC); it is generally dated to the 2nd century BC.

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[233] Litvinskij 1984, 68–70 fig. 16,1–3. Litvinskij – D'Amore – Lombardo 1993, 28–29 no. 1–2. Litvinskij 2002, 130–135 figs 2–4 proposes for Aličur a date 4th – 3rd / 2nd and for Charguš a date 5th – 3rd century BC [+ see also Stein 1932b].

[234] Litvinskij 1984, 70; 2002, 136.

[235] Demidenko – Firsov 2006, 285–287 fig. 5.

The lower end of the Nisa rhyton no. 39 is sculptured in the shape of a winged centaur, which carries a woman on its shoulder.[237] There have been other fragmented rhyta with mainly male centaurs at their end, sometimes shown alone and sometimes with a woman's figure on their left shoulder, with her right arm around him. A singular terminal figure shows a female centaur, a centauress or centauride, which is not known from early Greek literature. The winged centauress, a female *ichtyokentaur*, decorates the ivory pommel *(Ortband)* of a sword, which was part of the votive deposit 3 in corridor 2 of the Hellenistic Oxus temple at Taxt-i Sangīn in Tajikistan.[238] This important sanctuary, located in the basin between Sogdia and Bactria, was devastated either by invasions of the Parthians during the reign of Mithridates I in the first years of his reign after 171 BC or around 145/144 BC, when the Saka and Yüeh-chi forced their way into eastern Bactria. The votives seem to have been deposited during the third and the first half of the 2nd century BC, but ritual acts in the repaired building continued after the nomadic invasions in the era of the Great Kuṣāṇa beginning in 78 AD. The forepart of another silver rhyton shaped as a centaur, from Falerii / Cività Castellana in Italy, is another masterpiece of Seleucidian toreutics, dated to ca. 160 BC. The mythical creature holds a stringed instrument, which was plucked with a plektron in the right hand.[239]

The fusing of Achaemenid and Greek art form is impressively revealed by a group of eight rhyta from the treasure of Panagjurište, which was found near Seuthopolis in Thrace, the capital of King Seuthes III of the Odryses.[240] The magnificent assemblage of Hellenistic gold work dates to the end of fourth and beginning of the 3rd century BC, i.e. the post-Alexander period, and according to inscriptions on the vases came from workshops at Lampsakos in the Propontis, on the Anatolian side of the Dardanelles. The protome of one rhyton shows the forepart of a goat, while the handles of an amphora-rhyton in the shape of an amphora are formed as detailed elaborated centaurs with raised arms.[241]

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[236] Jettmar 1991a, 1 fig. 2. Litvinskij 1993, 143–144 figs 1–6. Artamonov 1970, 39 pl. 117, 119. Jäger 2006. The Pegasus-rhyton from Uljap is dated to the 5th century BC: Leskov 1990, 41 fig. 191.

[237] Rhyton no. 4, 29 and 39 from Nisa: Masson – Pugachenkova [Pugačenkova] 1982, 73, 132–135 pl. 27, 28. Invernizzi 1994, 196 pl. 34, 2. For a detail photo of the centaur, see: Lippolis 2007, 151 fig. 1. The forepart of a silver rhyton with a centaur from Falerii (Cività Castellana) is dated to ca. 160 BC (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung, inv. no. VIIa 49).

[238] Rickenbach 1989, 38 no. 9 (interpreted as hippokampos, the mount of the Greek sea-god Poseidon), Litvinskij – D'Amore – Lombardo 1993, 32 no. 8 (ichthyocentaur, with a dating to the 1st half of the 2nd century BC). Litvinskij – Pičikjan 2002, 33. Lindström 2016, 293 fig. 11.

[239] Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inventory no. VIIa 49. Hansen – Wieczorek – Tellenbach 2009, cat. no. 109.

The elements of a sacred animal and a mythical creature from Thessaly are a common feature in Seleucid art. The idea of a monster with a human head and an animal body clearly differs from the original Greek mythological theme about the struggle between Lapiths and centaurs in Thessaly and the final expulsion of the animal-like savage beings from their abode in the Pelion. The mythical clash of two different lifestyles characterizes a classical confrontation between the world of civilization in the plains and the barbarism of foreigners. The shaggy monsters of the mountains and woods were guests at the wedding-banquet of the Lapith king Peirithoos with Hippodameia in their palace at Argissa (Argura) on the Peneios River. Unaccustomed to drinking wine, the enraptured and lecherous centaurs assaulted the female guests, and the centaur Eurytion even tried to abduct the bride, glorious Hippodameia (she later bore Polypoites, the brave hero against Troy).[242] According to the old Thessalian myth the savage race were the descendants of the wise progenitor Chiron, who had his seat in a cave on the Pelion mountain.[243] He once educated Achilleus, the most outstanding hero before Troy. The motif of the devious centaur, which abducts a maenad as seen on a Nisa rhyton, could also be derived from another tradition, the legend of the death of Heracles (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IX I, 132–133). Accordingly, the hero at the royal court of Oineus at Kalydon had been able to win his beautiful daughter Deïaneira as a bride. On their way to Tiryns a rushing river made the passage difficult for them. The devious centaur Nessos offered to bring Deïaneira safely on his back to the other shore, while Heracles swam the waters. On the other side, Nessos tried to kidnap the woman, so Heracles killed him with a poisoned arrow – the beginning of the tragedy of the invincible hero. However, the terminal double figure of the rhyton lacks the dramatic situation of an abduction and seems to illustrate a local bacchanal scene, which was transformed by this Asian Hellenistic school of arts. The centaur holding a goat on the Imit rhyton represents another Eastern interpretation of the original Greek motif, which is known since the Dark Ages in the Hellenic and Iranian world.[244]

Centaur-like creatures with a composite nature in human-equine form, sometimes with a lion's head, appear already in the second millennium BC on seals of the Middle Assyrian and

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[240] Venedikov 1961.

[241] Rhyton no. 4 with reliefs of Hera, Apollon, Artemis and Nike: Venedikov 1961, 10 pl. 12–16. Amphora-rhyton with handles in the shape of centaurs: Venedikov 1961, 13, 16 pl. 25 and 29.

[242] *Ilias* II, 738–746, *Odysseia* 21, 295–303 and later Greek authors.

[243] Philippson 1944, 137–170.

[244] + Here HH added the following note "(I. Marasow, Die Rhyta im antiken Thrakien, Sofia 1978)" = Marasow 1978.

Kassite period, and are more common during the Neo-Assyrian period.[245] Among the earliest representations in the Aegean is the most remarkable painted terracotta statuette of a centaur, which was found in a cemetery of Lefkandi in Euboea.[246] It dates to the late Protogeometric phase, the late-10th century BC. Its function seems to have been that of a votive offering at a sanctuary, and in view of its symbolic significance in rituals of chthonian character the horse-man may represent a death daemon, as reported in the Heracles legend. Of the same date is an askos from Kos in the shape of a centaur. The idea of this Aegean motif from the Dark Ages seems to have been transmitted from Crete to Cyprus from Late Cypriot III period onward, during the 9th century BC.[247] Cretan influence on Cypriot religion is obvious, even earlier since 11th century BC: for example, the adoption of the goddess with uplifted arms, as the Cretan Goddess was very like their own fertility deity. There both motifs were transformed even iconographically by local mythological traditions and religious beliefs, as later with the centaur image in Central Anatolian Phrygia and in Middle and Central Asian areas.

The image of a bearded centaur bearing a tree on his left shoulder decorates a silver rhyton from Kelermes, apparently the work of a Greek artist. The rhyton itself is perhaps a local Scythian product, which is dated to the second half of the 7th century BC.[248] The motif was particularly popular in classical Greek art, as the centaur battle in the Parthenon frieze shows. Therefore, it is to be expected that the members of an adjacent rider nomadic people in the northern Black Sea region should have adopted it in their iconography, since other classical motifs such as mythical animals were introduced into Scythian imagery as well, especially during the 4th century BC, when speaking of a 'Graeco-Scythian' style. But there are no other testimonies of the centaur motif. The Kelermes image finds an equivalent in the painted terracotta frieze panel from Pazarlı, province of Çorum in North Anatolia, showing two antithetically arranged centaurs at full gallop, bearing a tree branch on their shoulders.[249] They are seen as local products of Greek prototypes, a common motif of Greek vase painting, which date from the 6th century BC as known from a terracotta revetment *(sima)* found at the Herakleion on Thasos.[250] The galloping centaur, who has uprooted a tree, flees from Herakles, who had visited the cave of the centaur Pholos. There in honour of the hero Pholos had opened a pithos with wine. Attracted by its scent, other centaurs appeared, armed with stones and trees. Herakles repulsed them with torches and arrows.

The model of the Iranian centaur clearly shows evidence for an adoption from Greek iconography. There the drunken centaurs battling the Lapiths usually clutch a bow and arrows, a tree branch or club. The artist of the eastern regions, perhaps from Iran, seems not to have been very familiar with classical mythology, and therefore he replaced the more threatening weapons with an animal. The motif of the centaur offering a small goat apparently reminds of the ritual importance of this animal in the abovementioned Dards' world of imaginations.[251] The dedication of an animal takes up an ancient Mesopotamian and Iranian motif of the offering bearer. The idea of the western centaur motif, unknown in Indian mythology, was also adopted in Gandharan art together with other mythical animals and divinities from the Hellenic world, such as Athena-Roma, the river god, Silenus, the satyr. The sculpture of the mythological creature in the Museum of Lahore once decorated the base of a stupa, as in the relief on the so-called step-rise panels.[252] The mythical animal is transformed to a marine monster, the ichthyocentaur, and occurs as relief standing in a rectangular step panel belonging to the staircase of a stupa.[253] A unique sculpture, probably from Sahri Bahlol, shows a bearded centaur with the body of a winged horse.[254]

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[245] Orthmann 1975, 338, 347 fig. 103 e, pl. 271 h. Collon 1987, 186 no. 881. See the centaur Middle Assyr. Seal: Padgett 2003, cat. no. 12.

[246] Desborough – Nicholls – Popham 1970. Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, 215 frontespiece, pls 251–252.

[247] Karageorghis 1996.

[248] Galanina 1997, 149, 151 catalogue no. 41, pl. 39.

[249] Koşay 1914, 6, 18 p. 29. Akurgal 1955, 78 pl. 49b.

[250] Schiffler 1976, 107–108, 218 no. 373. See the white ground lekyhtos of Diosphos Painter (500 BC).

A centaur shown on a tapestry is in a more peaceful habit when holding and blowing a horn or σάλπιγξ, a war trumpet, thus varying the normal instrument of a satyr, the flute.[255] The woollen pictorial tapestry is probably of Graeco-Bactrian origin, in secondary use, cut to make the legs of men's trousers. It was found in the cemetery of Šanpul (Sampul), situated east of the southern Silk Road oasis centre Khotan, the Chinese Yutian during the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 221 AD). The date for this fragment of the clothing is ascertained for a time after the mid-2nd century BC. The owner of the tapestry was perhaps a Sala horseman from the Khotan Oasis, who probably was killed like the other buried warriors in a battle of the 1st century BC against attacking Xiongnu.

The motif of this fabulous creature seems to have been adopted also in the rock art on the Upper Indus, if the interpretation of a carving as a centaur in Oshibat is convincing.[256] It again testifies the reception of figures from the classical mythological world such as the winged horse and the griffin as well as other mythological themes even in the remote mountain region. The epics of Homer were read both at the Persian court at Susa and in India, “for his poems it is said are sung by the Indians, who have translated them into their own language”, as the rhetorician Dio Chrysostomus (Dio Chr. Or. LIII.6) and Plutarchos in Alexander’s biography (Plut. Mor. 328 D) report. But there is no literary proof that there were any translations of Homer’s epics or other works of Greek literature in the Hellenistic world – except those in Latin during the later Roman Empire.[257] A stone relief found in the Peshawar plain, probably at Charsada, depicts the Trojan horse on wheels, which is pushed forward to Ilion and is attacked by Laocoon in Roman costume throwing his spear.[258] On the left the daughter of the Trojan king Priamos, the seer Kassandra in Indian dress, has raised her arms in horror to warn the Trojan heros of the impending destruction of their town. There are two other reliefs in the Peshawar Museum and on a stupa relief in a private collection in Swat, which is reported to have been found at a Buddhist site Pithao near Dargai in Malakand Agency, north of Peshawar. The relief renders the dramatic scene of Vergil’s Aeneid (II 50–53) and represents the most famous evidence for the widespread themes of classical epic literature.[259] As a result of Greek colonies founded by Alexander the Great in Bactria and Arachosia, the knowledge of Greek art, language and literary works could have been spread by a Greek urban minority as far as the Indus River Valley. Farther to the east their influence was less noticeable. Characteristic for this situation is the absence of Greek epigraphy, even in a centre like Taxila, where the Macedonian king was received in 326 BC by an Achaemenid satrap, and in friendly manner by the native governor of the city raja Ambhi, the son of Taxiles. Hellenistic influence in architecture and art is amply testified.[260] The only Greek epigraphic evidence in inscriptions from Pakistan comes from Swat, where at Barikot, the ancient stronghold of Bazira / Beira on the left bank of the Swat River, at least three onomastic graffiti are inscribed on fragmentary pot-sherds.[261] They were found in the Indo-Greek contact phase (Macrophase 3a), which dates to the 2nd century BC. The use of Greek, which is equally represented there with Brāhmī,[262] enable us to comprehend the extent to which Hellenistic influence penetrated into the Indian subcontinent, whereas there are no other such epigraphical testimonies from the territories east of the Indus.[263]

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[251] Litvinski 2003, 57 footnote 164. The monumental carving of an ibex with exaggerated long horns from Chilas IV (Jettmar 1984a, 202 pl. 1. Jettmar 1991a, 10 figs 14–15. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, front cover with the indication of a "sprout" on the breastpart remindful of the spout of the Imit rhyton. The dating of the carving only on the basis of the stylistic element "dentated" horns into the 1st millennium AD is not convincing.

[252] Ingholt 1957, 156 no. 391.

[253] 606 Ingholt 1957, 21, 155 nos 388, 389, 391. – Andandheri near Chakdara, Dir District: Dani 1968–1969, 58 pl. 21b. – Shnaisha Gumbat, 6 km south of Saidu, Swat: Rahman 1993, 53 pl. 59. – Sahri Bahlol: centaur on the panels belonging to the stair of a stupa, unpublished. – Ashraf Khan – Hasan – Lone 2005, 254 no. 332. "Gandhāra": Le Coq 1922, 20 pl. 17b.

[254] Private collection, H. 44 cm: Kurita 2003, II 322 pl. 705.

[255] Three cemeteries with 69 graves and 2 horse burials dating to 3rd century BC – 4th century AD. The tapestry was found in one of 3 mass graves with remains of 494 individuals. See Bunker 2001, 34–36 fig. 37. Stauffer 2007, 83–84, 213–214 cat no. 113 (with a dating of 206 BC – 220 AD). See also Wagner et al. 2009, 1069–1070 fig. 2 a–b (with a dating between 3rd – 1st centuries BC); Baumer 2014, 134 fig. 100.

[256] MANP 1, 1994, no. 34:1.

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[257] Tarn 1951, 379, 382. According Plutarch, “when Alexander was civilizing Asia, Homer was commonly read, and the children of the Persians, of the Susianans, and of the Gedrosians became acquainted with the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides”, as quoted in Weiitzmann 1943.

[258] British Museum [+ Zwalf 1996, no. 300; on this see Stewart 2016].

[259] Schist stone relief (32.3:5.4 cm) probably from Charsada in British Museum: Zwalf 1996, no. 300. Jairazbhoy 1995, 101 fig. 27. The fragment from Pithao near Dargai is published by Nazir Khan 1990, also mentioned by Hasan 2006, 46–47.

[260] Summarized by Dani 1986, 46–50.

[261] Tribulato-Olivieri 2017 [+ Tribulato 2021; there is also a poorly published inscribed potsherd from Pir Manakrai, Haripur (Dar – Jan 2015)].

[262] On this see the contributions by G. Fussman and S. Baums to Callieri – Olivieri 2020.

The rhyton as a compulsory feature in nomadic art occurs also on a group of Scythian statue-stelae in the north Pontic region. It is usually depicted in the right hand held up to the breast. Unlike the other images of war-chiefs in their classical pose and military accessories of rich weaponry, these figures are equipped with only one akinax suspended from the belt.[264] The two types of stelae seem to reflect two different social classes in the Scythian tribal organization, the heavily armed warrior or herdsman, while the other with the rhyton represents the priest or shaman. Royal connotations have been seen for an Indo-Scythian bronze object, a protome of a rhyton in the shape of a six-tusked elephant. Seated on its back is a figure in Indian dress. The elephant vessel in its conception has been interpreted as a ritual object, possibly used in a Kuṣāṇa palace, and compared by Martha L. Carter with the Imit rhyton.[265] Therefore, it could have been owned by such an authority. Hence, we may assume the residence of a local chieftain of Saka origin in the area of Imit. The rhyton and cauldron would have been part of a ritual service used for mixing wine with other ingredients to be libated in special ceremonies for deities.

3.7 The golden ring of Pattan in Kohistan

Relations with northern nomadic groups such as the Saka are revealed by another chance find from Pattan, located on the lower course of the Upper Indus River in the Kohistan District of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The find consists of a golden hollow bangle, which is now lost, and a large, solid golden ring. The latter is said to have been found in 1987 by a shepherdess while grazing her goats 1.5 km near Pattan; it was later cut into 57 pieces – 11 large and 46 small pieces – by a local goldsmith.[266] The site is marked by ruins of an ancient fortress, but apparently of later date. Altogether, the fragments weigh nearly 16 kilograms. The main joining ends of the solid girdle, which is square in section, are now missing. Its three faces show moulded figures, and the fourth, perhaps the inner side, has a series of five parallel lines. In a broad carved frieze on the ring, well-modelled stylized animals, such as camel, ram, goat, tiger, deer, boar, rabbit, standing horses with bridle and pommel, as well as eagles are depicted – a complete Asian zoo. Characteristic for the representation of human beings are the artificially elongated skulls of the men from the steppes. This custom was practised by the Hephtalites, the White Huns, as also seen on Śveta Huna coins and seal-stones, portraying the king's or other nobles' heads with a peculiar cranial deformation. As Robert Göbl argued basing on the coin legends, it was particularly characteristic of the Alχon tribe, which conquered Gandhara around 430 and Taxila under the chieftain Khiṅgila (ca. 430/440–490), and after the tribe's remigration from India to Zābulistān, the former Arachosia in the south of the Hindukush.[267] The Alχon belonged to a second wave of nomadic immigrants from Central Asia, which were described as Hsiung-nu, Chionites.[268]

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[263] Karttunen 1993.

[264] Telegin – Mallory 1994, 72 fig. 28, 3.4.

[265] Carter 1994, 134 fig. 10.9–10.

[266] The girdle was published in the report Archaeology in Pakistan, 1987–1988 – A Review, in: Nabi Khan 1988, 92–93 pl. 21. Rahman 1990. Jettmar 1991a, 11–17 figs 16–22. Nasim Khan 1999–2000. Jettmar 2002, 100–101 figs 26, 1–14. A systematic study and reconstruction of the girdle's frieze are still a desideratum.

During the second half of the 4th century the Kidārite Huns (the name Kidārites is derived from their king Kidāra) had their empire in Tokharistan, comprising the vast region of northern Afghanistan, southern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Under the king Kidāra, from whom the name of the Kidārites is derived, his army crossed the Khyber and subjugated Gandhara and adjacent regions. The Kidārites even invaded the Gupta empire in India during the reign of Kumaragupta I, the father and predecessor of Skandagupta (454–467), who pushed back their eastward movement.

Sir John Marshall reports about a skull "with its outstanding features being the lofty conical dome and flattened vertical occiput", found together with other skeletons in the court J of the Dharmarājikā monastery at Taxila. It "may well have belonged to one of the White Huns who sacked the the Dharmarājikā monastery" with its most conspicuous and oldest stupa, erected by the great Mauryan king Aśoka. Marshall's observation of human remnants of a massacre found in court J as a result of the invasion by the Hephthalites, the White Huns, after the middle of the 5th century has been called in question by Dani.[269] The custom of artificially deforming the head still being practised by the "K'iu-chi race" during the 7th century was also observed by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang on his return from his Indian travels across the Pamir through the districts of Kašgar and Khotan: "The children born of common parents have their heads flattened by the pressure of a wooden board".[270] The *turricephalus* of the men appearing in the Pattan panel demonstrates that this well-known custom has a long tradition in the Eurasian steppe-belt.

The costumes and the use of a goryt are also obvious "Scythian" elements. Another link to Achaemenid and Scythian attire is the ring itself, since the *Sakā haumavargā* as depicted on the façade of Achaemenid royal tombs I, II and V at Naqš-i Rustam and Persepolis are wearing a torque.[271] Royal torques as regalia of Achaemenid great kings were known to the ancient Greek world. An early testimony of such a typical Iranian ornament is known from necropolis B of Tepe Sialk, and the custom of wearing a twisted torque with animal head terminations is characteristic also for princes and nobles in the Parthian and Sasanian period.[272] Golden necklaces and bangles were sent as presents to another ruler (Hdt. III 20, 22). This well-known Iranian attribute with mainly lion's head terminations is worn by figures of deities and the paternal Persian ancestors of the Commagene Dynasty, beginning with the great king Darius, as represented on the stelae, the ancestor reliefs, of the colossal Hierothesion of the Nemrut Dağı in Southeast Anatolia.[273] The iconography impressively reveals the efforts of the dynasty to demonstrate the unification of two diverse cultural spheres, a lively synthesis of the Hellenistic and Iranian-Central Asian world. According to Persian tradition the torques played also a role as an official present or tribute submitted to the king, thus symbolizing the subjugation of the Medes, Saka, and Sogdians as demonstrated by their delegations on the Apadāna reliefs at Persepolis.[274] But also the Persian warriors in the army of Xerxes "wore torques and bracelets", as Herodotus remarks (Hdt. VIII 113). Judging by its shape as well as the interlaced patterns of the animal-relief, the Pattan ring may perhaps be an import from the plains of the steppe, but it could also be a product of local goldsmiths.

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[267] Göbl 1967, vol. I, 68–70, 77, 78, 237–239, 243; vol. II, 6, 235–246; vol. III, pl. 14–48, emission 57, 59, 60, 69–71, pl. 86 no. 22, 24–26. See also Baumer 2014, 99 fig. 76.

[268] + See Vondrovec 2008.

[269] After Marshall 1951, 290 five of the six skeletons originate from Buddhist monks, the sixth from a Hun. Göbl 1967, vol. II, 6, 238, 245. For a critical comment, see Dani 1986, 290 [+ it is therefore unnecessary to add further criticism to Marshall's over-interpretation of this single skull].

[270] Beal 1884, 19. The custom of artificially head deforming is discussed by Tomaschek 1888, 738.

[271] Vogelsang 1992a, 139. Calmeyer 2009, pl. 14,4.5.

The custom of members of Scythian nobility to wear a torque is testified by several Scytho-Saka funerals. In kurgan burials of the Pazyryk culture (5th – 3rd centuries BC) both female noble ladies and warriors are adorned with ornamented wooden necklaces, sometimes covered with gold foil.[275] The princely grave of Ziwiye in Kurdistan, the so-called Ziwiye Treasure found in 1947 by villagers on a hill above the village near Saqquiz in North Kurdistan in a bronze tub, contained a number of gold objects and ivories dating to Iron Age phase III.[276] If this extraordinary assemblage can be actually ascribed to a funeral, the different works of art which represent a singular repertoire of Scythian and Near Eastern creations and also a symbiosis of Assyrian and Scythian style would reveal the outstanding position of the buried Saka prince or warlord. The site is situated in the territory called Manna, a kingdom in northwest Iran located to the west of Media with chiefly a Hurrian population of the 9th century BC, which at the end of this century became a loyal ally of Assyria when it was threatened by the Urartians. Manna with its centres Hasanlu in the south of Lake Urmia and Marlik were conquered by the Median king Kyaxares (625–585 BC) after the defeat of Madyes, son of Bartatua, in ca. 625 BC. Among the objects there is also the fragment of a gold torque composed of superimposed ibex' heads.[277]

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[272] Ghirshman 1962, 73, 96 fig. 108 and 110, p. 113.

[273] Sandars 1996, 274, 388, 406–407 figs 334–336, 383–384 (Darius), 387 (Xerxes), 390 (Artaxerxes), 401 (Aroandas). Tanabe 1998, pl. 145–146 (Xerxes), pl. 150 (Darius).

[274] Bittner 1987, 247–249.

[275] Warrior tomb from kurgan 1 of Olon-Kurin-Gol in Mongolian Altai: Molodin – Parzinger – Ceveendorž 2007, 153 fig. 11. Molodin et al. 2008, 259–260 fig. 29. Parzinger – Molodin – Tseveendorzh [Tseveendorj] 2009, 214–215 fig. 21. Tomb of a princess from kurgan 1 at Ak-Alacha 3: Molodin – Polos'mak 2007, 142 fig. 5.

[276] Godard 1950; 1951. The Ziwiye Treasure and its importance for relations between Assyrian, Scythian and Urartian relations is discussed by Porada 1962, 117–129 and Jettmar 1964, 229.

Similar pectorals and bangles like the Pattan object are known from noble Sarmatian graves in the Lower Volga region and from the famous Siberian Collection of Peter the Great, dated to the 1st century AD, thus demonstrating how this ancient Iranian custom had survived.[278] A rich burial of a Sarmatian chieftain or priest in the village of Kosika, on the west bank of the Volga in the Enotaev region ca. 100 km northwest of Astrakhan, yielded a golden torque of apparent Scythian origin, dating to the 4th century BC.[279] The torque's ends were decorated with rams' heads, and the pectoral itself shows a characteristic animal battle scene in Eurasian nomadic art with lions, eagle-headed griffins with lion bodies, attacking a stag, ram and bull. The foreign contacts of the buried noble, perhaps brought from a campaign to Iran or Central Asia or received as a gift, are testified by other precious objects, such as a royal Achaemenid cylinder seal showing the king mastering two rampant lions under the sign of the god Ahura Mazda. Another famous example of such a massive round bar bangle or neck ring ending in flattened finals joined with a beaded band comes from a Scythian gold hoard, which was found in 1882 in the westernmost part of the Eurasian steppe at Vettersfelde (Witaszkowo) in the Lausitz (now Poland).[280] The treasure represents the westernmost testimony of Scythian art dating to the late 6th century BC, and obviously originates from the northern Pontic region. It remains a mere hypothesis as to whether the treasure had reached the Silesian area of the Lusitanian culture as a diplomatic gift of a Scythian tribal chief – following Persian custom – in order to win a tribe's favourable attitude in such a distant territory, or even to secure its loyalty for future Scythian ventures to the west.

Yet another ring of massive gold of the Pattan type has been retrieved from burial 5 in the royal kurgan of Aržan 2 in the Upper Enisej basin of the republic Tuva in the southern part of East Siberia. The decoration consisting of four parallel friezes of animals, twisted in a spiral around the ring, shows camels, wild boars, goats and sheep, horses with headgear, felines and a single stag, but contrary to the Pattan-ring no human image. It is striking that on both rings fabulous animals which occur so frequently in the later imagery are not depicted. The Aržan ring is dated to the late 7th century BC;[281] therefore, the proposed dating for its counterpart from the Indus to the 1st century BC, the period of the first Indo-Scythian king Maues at Taxila (ca. 75–65 BC), should be revised. The new chronological assignment contradicts the idea that the "neck-girdle could only have been used for decorating a colossal statue",[282] such as the monumental wooden Maitreya at To-li as mentioned by Faxian and at Ta-li-lo by Xuanzang, respectively. More likely it adorned the neck of a warlord as seen in the Scythian or Sarmatian stone statue-stelae, distributed mainly over the north Pontic zone. However, a number of these stone figures shown in full battle-dress have been found in the Lower Danube and in the north Caucasus region. A prominent example of such a warrior figure is known from Olkhovchik in the Donbass region of the Ukraine. The man is dressed in a richly decorated kaftan and wears in addition to a helmet and weapons a massive twisted necklace around his neck as sign of his outstanding authority.[283] The 'Dragon Master' of two nearly identical pendants found in tomb 2 of a noble woman at Tillya Tepe also wears a torque around his neck. The man is dressed as a nomad, perhaps representing a Saka chieftain or sovereign in the pose of a 'Master of Animals', which is so familiar in Near Eastern iconography.[284]

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[277] Godard 1950, 53 fig. 45. Ghirshman 1964a, 113 fig. 149.

[278] Rudenko 1962b, 16, 45 pl. 14–18. See also Jettmar 1991a, 11–13 figs 16–18. The golden torque from barrow 10 at Kobyakovo near Rostov has been included in the group of the Sarmatian 'Polychrome animal style': Zasetskaya 2010, 284 fig. 2,1.

[279] Fedorov-Davydov 1991, 10–11 cat. 2, pl. 14–16 (torque), 12–13 fig. 5 (cylinder seal).

[280] Furtwängler 1883, pl. 3,3. Adolf Furtwängler interpreted the unusual assemblage as tomb equipment of a Scythian warlord, but according to a recent hypothesis, the treasure was seen as a diplomatic gift by a Scythian ruler to a Lusatian tribe in order to secure its allegiance. A new reconstruction of the hoard's contents and the history of discovery are given by Nebelsick 2014, 27 no. 10 fig. 2.7,10 (neck ring). The cultural-historical context of the hoard is discussed by Parzinger 2016.

With regard to the custom of wearing such a prestigious object in the steppe region, the Pattan ring should be considered as a symbol for a high-ranking person, perhaps a chieftain of a Saka tribe, to demonstrate his position of power, and the imagery as being reminiscent of the mythological sphere from the past homeland in Central Asia. A golden bangle in the Peshawar Museum and an analogous bracelet in Cologne are another indication that such power symbols were used by the chiefs of the steppe people who invaded from Bactria to Northwest India.[285] In the frame the decoration shows two lions in succession, seizing each other by the tail. Corresponding to a group of engraved decorated animals, the body of the predators is embellished by geometric signs. The golden necklace of a priestess found in barrow 10 of the necropolis at Kobyakovo near Rostov on the Don is a later example of symbolizing power.[286] It is made in the technique of openwork with turquoise inlays, a masterpiece of Sarmatian gold work, dated to the middle Sarmatian phase from the late first to second half of the 2nd century AD. Like the gold crown from Tillya Tepe, it presumably was also produced in a Bactrian workshop. The necklace is composed of two parts, which are connected by a hinge. A seated male figure is framed on each side by three armoured zoo-anthropomorphic beings fighting against a bearded winged animal. On the front part of the ring, the full-bearded man is seated cross-legged on a carpet or pillow. He wears a kaftan, tight trousers and boots. On his knees is a short sword, and he holds a goblet with both hands. In his frontal position with sword and tumbler the image recalls a figure portraying a noble man, apparently a ruler, engraved on a rock at Bario Das, which is dated to the Early Buddhist period along the Upper Indus.

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[281] Čugonov – Parzinger – Nagler 2006, 115 pl. 5–13; 2010, 310–311 pl. 3; 4; 35; 36. (619–608 BC after dendrochronological analysis).

[282] Swati 2007, 108. Abdur Rahman according to Jettmar 2002, 101, had earlier "considered this object as a necklace not for a man, but perhaps for a statue of a deity (made of wood, like the memorial statues of the Kafirs).

[283] Telegin – Mallory 1994, 72 fig. 21,1 and 29.

[284] Sarianidi 1985, 24–25, 231 figs 44–47; 1986, 306. Schiltz 2008, 246–247 fig. 61.

[285] Peshawar Museum, height 4 cm, diameter 7 cm: Thiele (ed.) 1962, no. 289. Ghirshman 1962, 259 fig. 355 D. Jettmar 1964, 182 with photo p. 183. Schiltz 1991 [+ = 1994?], 382 fig. 301. For a photo of better quality, see: Stavisky [Stawiski] 1979, fig. 10. – Cologne, Römisch-Germanisches Museum, von Diergardt collection. Both pieces came from the art trade without indication of origin. Presumable dating to 3rd century BC.

[286] Museum Rostov, diameter 22 cm. Report of the excavation in 1987: Prochorova – Guguev 1992, 146–147 figs 5–7 (necklace). For better photos of the necklace, see the exhibition catalogues: Tokyo 1991, 35 no. 130. Karabelnik-Matta ed. 1993, 266 no. 140. – Mez – Pletneva 2014, 63 fig. 3 compare

3.8 Short swords and daggers with cross-guard and pommel hilt

Depictions of single weapons are very rare in rock art during all periods. Few petroglyphs show the reflex bow (Ba Das East 36:7,13). Exceptional is a group of petroglyphs from Bal Satar Nala in Yasin, which are clearly related to the later period of nomadic migrations and which could be connected with the rise of the Xiongnu kingdom during the 2nd century BC. It had an effect on western tribal movements, such as the abovementioned westward expansion of the Yüeh-chih, driven out of their homeland between the Qilian Mountains and Dunhuang. The Saka had to move to Bactria, where they terminated the supremacy of the Graeco-Bactrians in 130 BC. A complex of carvings exposes – aside from images of warriors and horsemen involved in battle scenes – singular drawings of a *gorytus*, the combination bow-case and quiver, long swords, and especially short swords or daggers depicting types of Sarmatian weapons. Some of the daggers with simple geometric decoration reflect the significant polychrome inlays of the later “Eurasian Animal Style”, which shows a tendency towards a more simplified scheme of ornamentation during the Sarmatian period.

The short sword with cross-guard and pommel hilt matches a dagger with an iron double edged blade found in the knight’s grave 4 of Tillya Tepe necropolis, which contained also the golden figure of a ram. The hilt and the wooden, leather-covered four-lobed scabbard is faced by gold plating and encrusted with turquoise insets and richly decorated with relief ornaments showing beasts. The excavator Viktor I. Sarianidi proposed for this sword type a Central Asian or even local Bactrian or early Kuṣāṇa workshop, which produced jewellery on the order by possibly high rank nomad persons.[287] The question as to which nomadic tribe the princely family from Tillya Tepe belonged, represented by the six rich graves of a chieftain

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the central figure of the buckle with similar representations from the Iron Age in Eurasia up to early medieval Siberia, “an archaic feature originating from Iranian roots”.

[287] Sarianidi 1985, 39–41, 247–248 fig. 157–167; 1986, 322–326 fig. 316–317. Brentjes 1993, 34 fig. 37–38. [+ Brentjes 1996; for representations of these weapons in early Gandharan reliefs from Swat (1st century AD, Saka cultural phase), see Olivieri 2022a: 88].

and five noble women, is still disputed. The excavator Sarianidi saw in the male person one of the Yüeh-chih warlords, driven out from the steppes of northwestern China by the Xiongnu, whereas other archaeologists suppose a Saka background.[288] But the significant Tillya Tepe style with its excellent granulation and inlay work reflecting Indian and Hellenistic traditions clearly deviates from the art of the different Saka groups and of the Yüeh-chi. On the other hand, the correspondence with Sarmatian art is obvious.

The high regard for this goldsmith work with elaborate polychrome incrustation in Scytho-Siberian tradition is evidenced by its wide spread during the Sarmatian period as far as the Pontic and Volga region. Similar in shape and construction like the Tillya dagger are other short four-lobed swords (of the same type) from the Sarmatian kurgan 1 in the Dachi necropolis at Azov on the Lower Don and from sarcophagus 2 of the burial chamber in the cemetery of the Sarmatian town of Gorgippia in Kuban, dating from the second half of the 1st and the end of the 2nd to the middle of 3rd centuries AD.[289] Both daggers from Tillya Tepe and Dachi, which show differences in style and composition of the animal battles, have been assigned to a common Sarmatian "Geometric polychrome style (Puzzle style)". Yet the varying decoration reflects different artistic traditions and therefore also different centres of their manufacture.[290] The specimen from Gorgippia represents the latest example of this sword type, which has other counterparts in the rich tomb of Kossika on the Volga River and in the cemetery of Mtskheta in Georgia: a common feature of Central Asian art. The significant polychrome inlay work (incrustation) with semi-precious stones and the elaborately relief ornaments with inserted Bactrian camels, like on the hilt of the Dachi dagger, the eagle, the griffin and other fabulous animals are characteristic of Sarmato-Alanic polychrome art work originating from a Bactrian or moreover Central Asian workshop. The dynasty of Commagene in its representative monument symbolizes a synthesis of the Hellenistic and Iranian-Central Asian world. Daggers with a four-lobed sheath occur even earlier in the last phase of the Scythian period, i.e. the late phase of the Pazyryk Culture in the Altai (5th – 3rd century BC). An example of an iron dagger in a wooden sheath, an iron war-pick and a quiver still containing bow and arrows complemented the typical set of weaponry of a warrior grave in kurgan 1 at Olon-Kurin-Gol 10 in the Mongolian Altai Mountains. It is one of the earliest burials of the Pazyryk Culture, dating to the early 3rd century BC.[291] Also found in the south of this site at Bagan Türgen Gol cemetery in kurgan 8 was the same assemblage of weaponry, including bronze daggers with wooden four-lobed scabbards of the Pazyryk style.[292] The same dagger type occurs as well in kurgan 3 of the Verkh-Kal'džin II burial ground in the neighbouring Ukok Plateau of the Russian Altai.[293] The plateau lies at a height of more than 2000 m and is surrounded by high mountain ridges. It was famed for its favoured winter pastures. Across high passes routes from Mongolia to the valleys of Kazakhstan or Central Altai and from Southern Siberia to Xinjiang traverse this region, which mediated cultural influences from High Asia as far as the Upper Indus. The wooden adornment of a horse-harness in the shape of two griffin heads adopts a motif as common in the High Altai as in the contemporary necropolis at Verkh-Kal'džin and in the Kuturguntas 1 burial found in the Ukok Plateau.[294] This animal of semiotic meaning appears together with deer in tattoos of mummies from the Ukok burial grounds, characteristic of the Pazyryk Culture. The fragment of an embroidered woollen fabric from a trouser leg found in barrow 6 of the large kurgan groups in the Noin Ula mountains on the Selenga River in North Mongolia shows the lower part of a dagger's scabbard, which resembles the characteristic Sarmatian type. The richly furnished tomb included remarkable funeral offerings, such as a felt carpet with combat scenes in the typical nomad animal style, recalling scenes of the Pazyryk tapestries. The kurgan in the Transbaikal region is dated from the 1st century BC onward and is brought in connection with the inhumation of a Xiongnu chieftain.[295]

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[288] Sarianidi 1985, 18; 1986, 326–327. Schiltz 2008, 295.

[289] Azov (Dachi), Museum Azov: Tokyo 1991, 34, 102–103 no. 108–109. Bespalȳĭ 1992. Baumann – Karabelnik 1993, 251–253. Brentjes 1993, 32–33 fig. 36. Karabelnik-Matta ed. 1993, 251–253 no. 133. Schiltz 2001, 203–218 no. 238. – Gorgippia, Krasnodar Museum: Nabatschikow 1989, 178 no. 250 pl. 46. Tokyo 1991, 34, 139 no. 177. Schiltz 2001, 270–280 no. 335. On Mtskheta see Apakidze et al. 1958, p. I.

[290] Zazetskaya 2010, 296–297 fig. 11, 3–4.

[291] Molodin – Parzinger – Ceveendorž 2007, 154 fig. 13. Molodin et al. 2008, 260 fig. 30. Parzinger – Molodin – Tseveendorzh [Tseveendorj] 2009, 216 fig. 22.

The characteristic dagger type with its case decorated with lion-head bosses instead of the simple four lobes, was worn also by the kings of the small kingdom of Commagene in Southeast Anatolia. Stelae at Arsameia-on-the Nymphaios and the relief cycle on the west terrace of the Hierothesion on top of the Nimrud Dağı in the East Taurus range display the "dagger in its case with five decorative bosses in the form of lion heads" as a characteristic royal Iranian motif.[296] The Dexiosis reliefs on the west terrace show King Antiochos I (70–38 BC), the son of Mithradates Callinicus, in a scene of greeting with the the sun-god Helios, with Zeus-Oromasdes and with Heracles.

The depiction of isolated daggers and other weapons is characteristic for the significant anthropomorphic stelae of the 9th century BC in the foothills of the Caucasus and has been interpreted as representations of warriors or war-lords. In Hakkâri in Southeast Anatolia a group of 13 stelae, which can be dated even earlier to the Late Bronze Age, display mainly in bas-relief warriors with a number of weapons and other symbolic objects.[297] Such Scythian or Sarmatian statue-stelae are generally life-sized and are distributed throughout the north Pontic region. But images of weapons occur also on the stag stones of Aržan in Tuva[298] and in Mongolia, which have been regarded as the most ancient testimonies of the evolving Eurasian animal style.

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[292] Törbat – Giscard – Batsükh 2009, 227 fig. 12.

[293] Derevianko [Derevyanko] – Molodin 2000, 109 fig. 136.

[294] Polos'mak – Molodin 2000, 72, 73, 77 fig. 17.

[295] Rudenko 1962a, 106, 121 pl. 64; 1969, 94, 112 pl. 64. For the chronological and cultural assignment, see: Jettmar 1964, 154.

[296] Sandars 1996, 395–396 figs 293, 295, 315, 347 (east and west terrace), fig. 655 (Arsameia-on-the Nymphaios). Tanabe 1998. pls 115, 120, 130, 133 (west terrace), pls 166, 169–171 (Arsameia-on-the-Nymphaios) and pl. 198 (Gaziantepe Museum). See also the comparison with the Tillya types: Tokyo 1991, 134–135.

[297] Sevin 2001 and 2005.

The custom of depicting weapons in the Eurasian rock art since the Aeneolithic period is widespread with the most famous images in northern Italy, especially in Valcamonica.[299] They are also found on a further impressive group of monuments: the Copper Age anthropomorphic statue-like stelae and statue-menhirs, which occur from the Atlantic coast to Southeast Europe during the 4th – 3rd millennium BC. Their main distribution ranges from the north Caucasus in the east across the north Pontic region to Bulgaria in the west.[300] Originally the stelae had been erected in sanctuaries composed of circular enclosures and surrounding stone slabs.

Until the end of the 1980ies only few metal finds and a relatively small number of ca. one dozen bruisings, with prototypes in the "animal style of the steppes", were known from the mountain valleys south of the Hindukush and Karakorum range. According to Jettmar, these images of animals, some of them "not indigenous in the mountains", such as the stag, reached the upper Indus region "either by settlers or transmigrants" originating from the northern steppes.[301] Until now the number of significant carvings and metal ornaments from numerous plundered, large graveyards in the valleys of the Upper Indus and its tributaries has dramatically increased and found their way into museums around the world. Therefore, this region might be really classified as an "additional province of animal art", introduced by a new immigrated ethnical element of nomads, the Saka. The images with varying compositions of significant character are apparently representative of an "actual" and not a "retarded animal style". At least since the third millennium BC this region shared common trends both of a nomadic culture or a cattle-breeding and an agricultural society with the northern steppes.

4 Iranic Connections

As a result of the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire under Great King Kyros II (559–529 BC), founder of the Persian empire of the Achaemenids, beyond the borders of Media and Persis into Central Asia and the west of India, the most eastern provinces Arachosia and Ga(n)dara (i.e. Gandhāra) were established there: in all XXIII provinces of his empire which extended from the Ionian cities of west Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, Babylonia into the Caucasus and the Transcaspian provinces, through Bactria as far as the Indus River and into the vast tract of land between the rivers Jaxartes and Oxus. The province of Arachosia, located at the southern piedmont of the Hindukush range between Seistan and the Indus Valley, represented with its political centre Kandahar, Alexandria in Arachosia, an important economic and strategic mediator between the civilizations of Iran and India. It was also linked with the regions of Bactria and Sogdia north of the Hindukush.[302]

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[298] + HH added here this reference: "(Kossack 1980, 103–106 fig. 3,4 [Aržan], anthr. Stelae fig. 49.)".

[299] Anati 1972.

[300] Telegin – Mallory 1994. Mezzena 1998.

[301] Jettmar 1991a, 3–5 reckons the testimonies of animal art in the Northern Areas as a result of "cultural diffusion" or "local copies made by descendants of the settlers coming from the steppes".

During the reign of Dareios I the Great (522–486 BC) the empire reached its peak. Added to the eastern province was Ga(n)dara and also Hinduš (i.e. Sindh), "by the favour of Ahuramazda", as mentioned in the inscription of his tomb. Their delegations are depicted on the Apadāna at Persepolis (no. 14 and 18). According to Iranian cosmology the lands and peoples of Darius' world were divided into seven geographic regions. Ga(n)dara and Hinduš belonged to the fourth unit, the "Border Lands", including Arachosia, Sattagydia and the Saka region of the pointed-hat tribes.[303]

Ga(n)dara, at first attached to Bactria as an administrative region, was established as an independent satrapy in ca. 508 BC. It is bordered by the rivers Kabul in the west and Indus in the east. From the records it is not evident how far this satrapy extended to the Indus Valley, into the often inaccessible lands of ancient Dardistan, which covered the mountain region east of the Kunar River with the main valley and side valleys along the upper course of the Indus River as far as the Gilgit River and its tributaries.[304] With the incorporation of Gandhara into the Achaemenid empire in the seventh satrapy and the Indian or twentieth satrapy (Hdt. III, 29), in which Taxila was included, also cultural Persian influence should have been introduced. But during the so-called period of its occupation at Taxila there are only few traces, which can be connected with the presence of Achaemenids.[305] Influence is only testified by few royal coins of local origin from the Bhir Mound, but there are no other artifacts which can be attributed to definite Iranian influence. Sir Mortimer Wheeler only assigned three superbly designed gems from one of the Bhir Mound hoards, dating from the end of 4th century BC, which had been described as Ionian Greek, to Achaemenid workmanship.[306] They were found together with so-called local bent-bar coins. According to Wheeler, "it is likely enough that these hoards were either Persian loot brought to Taxila by Alexander's following, or were otherwise a sequel to the devastation of the Persian empire and the dispersal of Achaemenian craftsmanship". Also the upper occupation of the eastern mound B at Hathial with its fortification, the so-called

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[302] Arachosia is not listed by Herodotus (Hdt. III 89–97) among the 20 *satrapai* or *archai*. His list only partially corresponds to the list of the countries subjugated by the Achaemenids, as enumerated in the Behistun inscription and in other Persian inscriptions: Dandamaev – Lukonin 1989, 98–99. [+ HH added here these references: "Vogelsang, EW 55)". The first should refer to Vogelsang 1992a or 1992b, the second possibly to an article by P. Bernard on Arachosia (Bernard 1995) in which the scholar addresses the issue of eastern satrapies in the early pages (published in East and West 55, 1–4)].

[303] Darius' *Haft Kišvar*: Shahbazi 1983, 244–245 fig. 3.

[304] Biddulph 1880, 157–158. Drew 1875. [+ On these issues see Callieri 2023].

[305] Fabrègues 2006 [+ see Olivieri – Iori 2019, 2021a for new data from Barikot and a different interpretation of the former archaeological data from Gandhara and Taxila].

[306] Wheeler 1968, 174 with footnote 111, pl. 51 [+ see above for integrations].

Acropolis, has been dated to the Achaemenid period. The pottery there finds comparisons in sites of the same period at Bala Hisar in Charsada and Swat valley.[307] The Achaemenid domination in this region seems to have declined until the reign of Artaxerxes II (404–359 BC) and prior to Alexander's army approach to Gandhara in 328 BC. When the Macedonian king was received in friendly manner by the governor Taxiles and by representatives of Abisares, the king of the mountain-Indians, in the "large and prosperous city" Taxila in 326 BC (Arr. *Anab.* V.8), the Achaemenid predominance there at last was a thing of the past.

In the taxation list of Dareios I a people named 'Dadicae' together with the Sattagydians, Gandharans and Aparytae formed the seventh νομός, an administrative district which had to pay together a tribute of 170 talents in gold and silver. The νομός can by no means be equated with a satrapy (Hdt. III, 91).[308] In the army roster of Xerxes I (486–465 BC) contingents of the Gandharans and *Dadicae* were under one command and equipped with Bactrian costume and weaponry (Hdt. VII, 66).[309] The Dadicae, "a powerful tribal confederation" from Dardistan, located north of Gandhara and linked to the account / tale of 'gold-digging ants', have been associated with the *Derdae* (Strab. XV 1.44), the *Deradrai* or *Daradrai* (Plin. *HN* VI 67 and Ptol. *Geog.* VII 1.42),[310] and the Dardanoi (Dionysios *Periég.* 1138). But, the Derdae of Strabo, referring to Megasthenes, may not be granted as identical with the mountaineers, who appear as the people of *Daradas*: they were a mighty power in the 9th and 10th centuries, recorded in ancient Indian texts, such as in the *Mahabharata* and in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, the chronicle of the kings of Kashmir.[311]

4.1 West Iranian motifs in the rock art: Celestial horses

In view of archaeological evidence, Iranian influence clearly extended as far as the upper course of the Indus River. There, these distinct stylistic elements may have been introduced both by supposed Iranian military and by trade activities along the known trade routes. A group of isolated rock engravings shows a new style in the significant design of animals and in the garment and armament of the depicted warriors. These petroglyphs are characterised by linear contours, as shown in examples from the northern bank at Thor North, Kino Kor Das [Table 13.2], on the "altar rock" at Thalpan [Table 14.2], at Ba Das East, and at Alam Bridge: depicted there are ibexes, stags, horses or fabulous animals in the typical "kneeling" pose, i.e. with bent knee [Table 12.1, 13.1].[312] These images are closely matched in execution in Persian reliefs, seals and vase painting, and with devices which are largely Achaemenid in inspiration. The tasseled mane of the fabulous animal, perhaps a winged horse, from Thalpan consists of a row of sharp cuneiform engravings. Both Achaemenid representations and Bactrian stone-cutting used the bruising technique of small untreated patches or blank fields, like in a series of fabulous animal images from Thalpan and Kino Kor Das.[313] The spiralling horns and the long tail ending in a volute are other characteristic features of these fabulous creatures. They depict ibexes with attached tails of a predator or horses, reminding of "Pegasus" with added wings and horns. These attachments / additions represent stylistic elements that belonged to the artistic repertoire in Iran since the early first millennium BC.[314] The legendary horse of Alexander the Great, named Bukephalas, the oxhead, which died after the victory of the Macedonians over the Indian Raja Poros beyond the Hydaspes River in 326 BC, was also adorned with golden horns when going to battle (Arr. *Anab.* V 19). The pattern of horned horses was apparently adopted by his Seleucidian and Ptolemaic successors. The custom of decorating the horse with a headdress or so-called mask is testified by the famous horse burials in Pazyryk kurgans 1 and 2.[315] Some of the so-called horse-masks made of different materials were furnished with pairs of ibex horns or deer antlers, which were gilded with gold leaf. To the same period belongs the Berel' kurgan 11 in the cemetery found in the Buchtarma Valley in rajon Katonkaragaj, which is situated in the Altai region of eastern Kazakhstan. Some of the 13 horses which had been buried behind the northern wall of the double grave of noble persons, perhaps mother and son, were decorated with the same headdress and attached wooden ibex horns.[316] The finds from the wooden burial chamber including works of art in the characteristic Scytho-Siberian animal style are dated to the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. The excavators connected these burials with the myths of the gold-guarding griffins in the land of the Arimaspians, living far beyond the area occupied by the Scythians (Hdt. IV, 27).

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[307] Oddly enough, there are no royal coins, with the exception of one Persian siglos: Dani 1986, 41, 44 figs 11–12, dates the Achaemenid period at Taxila between ca. 522–326 B.C [+ we are not considering here the so-called 'Shahikhan-Dheri hoard' published in Bopearachchi 2017]. For testimonies of Achaemenid influence in Gandhara, see also Jairazbhoy 1995, 43–45 [+ see above for integrations].

[308] Vogelsang 1992a, 200–202 tab. 15. Jettmar 1980a, 11. According to the taxation list after the reform of Dareios, the tribute of the 7th νομός was the lowest of the 20 administrative districts, with a tribute of 360 talents, for νομός 20 of the Indians – the highest.

[309] Vogelsang 1992a, 194–195 tab. 14.

[310] McCrindle 1901, 108.

[311] Stein 1900 [+ here HH added this sidenote: "(See footnote Battle-Axe people)" with reference to Chapter 7 below].

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[312] Jettmar 1983a, 161 fig. 3. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13–14 pl. 4; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 38–39 fig. 1.2; 54–55 no. 7–9; MANP 6, 2003, no. 30: 60.73.115.116.190, especially no. 226, which is similar to Ba Das East: MANP 10, 2011, 50–51 pl. 29 no. 9:3. See also the lost images of a goat and bull at Alam Bridge: Jettmar 1979a, 920 fig. 3. [+ HH added a translation of "kneeling": "*(Knielauf)*"].

[313] See also Francfort 2002, 66 fig. 12, 13.

[314] MANP 6, 2003, no. 30: 115.190. For examples from Sialk (10th – 9th century BC), Hasanlu (8th century BC) and Luristan: Ghirshman 1964a, 9 fig. 9; 350 fig. 350; 74 fig. 499–500. Winged fabulous animals on a pectoral of the Ziwiye Treasure: Godard 1950, 25–35 figs 15–25.

[315] Rudenko 1970, 179–186 pl. 119.

[316] Samašev – Bazarbaeva – Žumabekova 2002, 257–261 fig. 17–18, 27.

The characteristic design of spiralling horns adorning the head of caprids or horses is attested in other rock art provinces, too. Images of horned caprids, resembling the argali *(gnyan)* spread in this region, are found in Upper Tibet.[317] Three drawings of horses with added horns from Tamgaly in the Ferghana mountain range were dated to the Bronze Age.[318] But this motif of mounted horses has been normally assigned to the later Scytho-Saka tradition, when ritually slaughtered horses wearing bit and bridle were buried together with the deceased king (Hdt. IV 71–72).[319]

The motif of animals drawn in the characteristic pose with the formal interrelation between one raised foreleg and the other with bent knee, the "Knielauf-posture", has been connected with similar representations known from Achaemenid and Urartian imagery, but apparently it can be derived from Assyrian art.[320] The panel with two pairs of ibexes kneeling to a rosette, palmette or the motif of the 'sacred tree' appear in the frieze on an enamelled bottle and on engraved ivory strips and plaques of Assyrian origin from Ziwiye near Saqqiz in Kurdistan like on the Nimrud ivories.[321] The same motif is found on a Late Assyrian enamelled bottle and on clay buckets from Assur.[322] The same pose is assumed by "a heavily proportioned, kneeling and winged bull, with one of the forelegs bent back on the ground and the other extended forward", which decorates the 'Egyptian blue' paste inlaid gorget found in Burnt Building II at the citadel of Hasanlu (level IVB). It belongs to an assemblage of objects such as the famous bronze / copper horse's breastplate, a masterwork of the 9th century BC from northwest Iran, displaying the heraldic composition of a kneeling figure between two bulls.[323]

The iconographic source for this specific motif may have been derived from the feature on Assyrian cylinder seals showing the kneeling huntsman, always an archer, in opposition to his animal prey.[324] The distinct Urartian figural art is normally characterized by a striking statuesque design repeating schematised and stereotyped animals, warriors and gods. Diverging from this scheme the friezes in wall paintings in palaces and temples at Altıntepe in Northeast Turkey and Arinberd (Erebuni) in Armenia reveal a central pattern of kneeling bulls alternating with pairs of sphinxes or lions, flanking a stylised rosette.[325] The same theme showing kneeling bulls flanking a rosette is repeated on the open-work frieze of a bronze sheet found in the Ḫaldi temple of Toprakkale (7th century BC). In an exceptional battle scene between Urartians and Assyrians, represented on a bronze shield from the Upper Anzaf Kale near Van (7th century BC), two horses frightened by the attack of lions are depicted in the same pose of submission.[326] In Urartian imagery besides fabulous animals such as the winged horse and bull, which have antecedents in Assyria, there exists a predilection for new creations and boldness in joining parts of humans and animals together, a tendency unknown in Syro-Assyrian art. But the motif of animals with bent knee and the overall composition is clearly inspired from the wall paintings and glazed-brick panels of Neo-Assyrian palaces, such as in Fort of Salmanassar III (858–824 BC) and the palaces of Adad Nērārī III (811–781 BC) at Nimrud-Kalḫu, of Sargon II (722–705 BC) at his short-lived capital Ḫorsābād-Dūr Šarrukīn, and the governor's residence at Til Barsip (Tell ʿAhmar).[327] This habitual design is repeated by gazelles and goats, kneeling to palmettes, incised on reliefs in the famous northwest palace at Nimrud of Assurnasirpal II (884–858 BC) and on ivory panels from the 9th century BC.[328] This characteristic feature is also found in the composition of contest scenes on Middle Assyrian cylinder seals, which show gambling animals or game grasped by a hero and also for the first time heroes in this posture.[329]

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[317] sKabs-ren spungs-ri: Bellezza 2002, 139 figs XI-11d, 12d. Bellezza 2008, 171 fig. 288.

[318] Kšica 1966, 57 pl. 31, 1. Francfort 1998, 308 fig. 17.3 interpreted the horns as "non-bovid penises".

[319] + HH added here "(Samašev u. a. 2000)" = Samašev – Bazarbaeva – Žumabekova 2000 (?) or Samašev – Bazarbaeva – Žumabekova 2001, 2002.

[320] Ghirshman 1964a, 61 fig. 75; 193 fig. 240; 258 fig. 312; 264 fig. 323; 324 fig. 398.

[321] Enamelled bottle, 8th – 7th century BC: Godard 1950, 67–68 figs 55–56. For a colour photo see: Porada 1962, 122 with plate. Ivories from Ziwiye: Godard 1950, 78–81 figs 66, 67, 70. Wilkinson 1975, 20 fig. 1–2. Ivories from Nimrud with drawings of kneeling animals: op. cit. 82 fig. 67. Mallowan 1966, 270–271 fig. 253; 248–250 fig. 213–214, 221; 590–592 figs 566, 568.

[322] Andrae 1923, 21–25 pls 20, 24–26, 28b.

[323] Winter 1980, 22–23 fig. 59 and 17–31; fig. 64 shows another kneeling figure on a bronze repoussè bowl.

[324] Hasanlu, 'Central Assyrian style': Marcus 1996, 43–44 nos 57–58; Collon 1987, 75. For the feature of the kneeling animal in Middle Assyrian sealings, see op. cit. 55 nos 281, 287.

4.2 *Mythical creatures and fabulous beasts*

To the group of fabulous beasts belongs a singular carving found above the Alam Bridge. The composite creature is characterized by the winged body, the hind legs and the tail of a lion, the foreparts of an ungulate, and the crested head of a bird of prey as a griffin. This monster, the eagle-headed lion, appears in Near Eastern and Aegean art since the 14th century in different versions. The popular motif, while being interpreted in different styles, apparently had its origin in the Egyptian royal imagery of the Old Kingdom (2649–2150 BC) and during the

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[325] Altıntepe: Özgüç 1966, 30 fig. 14 and 20. Özgüç 1969, 8, 63 fig. 2. Nunn 1988, pl. 107. – Arinberd: Oganesyan [Ohanesjan] 1966 [+ = 1961?], fig. 33, 36, 38. Loon van 1966, 66 pl. 9. Oganesyan [Ohanesjan] 1978 [+ = 1973?], 68 pl. 9–11.

[326] Toprakkale: Loon van 1996, 101–102 pl. 20. Azarpay, 1968, 68 pl. 59. – Anzaf: Belli 1999, 66–68 fig. 31. About winged horses: Loon van 1996, 121, 169 fig. 15, pl. 31. Azarpay 1968, 47 pl. 24.

[327] Nimrud-Kalḫu: Reade 1963, 41 pl. 9. Mallowan 1966, 454 fig. 373. Orthmann 1975, 316–317. Nunn 1988, 125 pl. 93. Ḫorsābād-Dūr Šarrukīn: […]- Til Barsip (Tell ʿAhmar): Parrot 1961, 262 fig. 336 [+ the footnote is left partially incomplete by HH].

[328] Layard 1849–1853, pl. 43. Mallowan 1966, I: 250 fig. 213–214, 221; II: 588 fig. 566, 568.

[329] Moortgat 1940, 61 no. 573. Orthmann 1975, 351–352 pl. 271, f, l. Collon 1987, nos 281, 287, 915. Collon 1995, 32 fig. 15.

2nd millennium BC received its final design in Syrian art.[330] It is an object that was constantly repeated in varying compositions on delicately cut Assyrian open-work ivory plaques of the 9th century BC.[331] Winged griffins played an important role in Iranian iconography since the end of the second millennium BC, with examples from Marlik and the Ziwiye Treasure in Iranian Kurdistan revealing traditions different from the "Syro-Assyrian style" and other hybrid forms such as the snake-mouthed head.[332] The treasure from the Ziwiye burial has been dated to the 7th century BC. But close parallels to the Alam Bridge carving are again known from Achaemenid seals, where the winged griffin with eagle head is also depicted with closed beak.[333] There the mythical creature appears both in animal combats and as an opponent of the royal hero in contest scenes. The motif is also present in the art of the Graeco-Bactrian period, for example, in an *intaille* of calcedony in Tillya Tepe. An ivory bracket in the shape of a delicately carved leogryph, bearing a riding woman on its back, comes from the treasure of Begram, the capital of the Empire of the Kuṣāṇa Alexandreia of the Caucasus.[334] The *śārdūla* with the body of a lion, wings of an eagle, and the beak of a parrot resembles in its rearing position the Alam Bridge carving.

Finally, the motif occurs on reliefs in Gandhara.[335] As regal emblems both the lion and the winged griffin flank the central yaksha in the throne decoration of a Kashmir bronze, a preaching Buddha displaying the gesture of turning the wheel of law (dated to the 8th century).[336] There monsters in different variations adorn mainly rectangular panels of stairs belonging to votive stupas. Because the drawing of a stupa is engraved on the other side of the rock, a later date of the griffin can also be assumed, as seen in corresponding fantastic creatures in the Sumtsek of Alchi in Ladakh dating to the 12th century. There in the same rearing position two *vyālas*, flanking both sides of the central Tārā's throne, stand upon white elephants.[337] The goddess Tārā or Tārakā is particularly known in Mahayānā Buddhism, where she is implicitly the North Star and therefore a guide for the devotee and also a consort of Avalokiteśvara. Exquisitely painted *vyālas* in a similar aggressive position occur also in the contemporaneous murals of the Vairocana Temple I (western temple of the Supreme Buddha) at the temple-site of Mangyu in Western Ladakh, which are related in their iconographic program to those of Sumtsek.[338] Together with elephants and *makaras* they flank the pillars of the celestial palace belonging to the four-headed and eight-armed Dharmadhātu Vāgiśvara Mañjuśrī, who is seated upon his lion throne, thus signifying his status as "Omniscient Lord". The mythical animal occurs as traditional adornment of thrones for Buddhist deities, also on medieval bronzes from Kashmir.

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[330] Its characteristic elegant shape with the slender body of a winged lion, upraised tail and raptor's head in symmetric compositions is seen in antithetic griffin images on gold ornaments from Qatna in Syria (15th – 14th century BC): Pfälzner 2009, 221–222. The motif of the lion-headed eagle can be classified into several types, which occurs from Old Akkadian (2350–2150 BC) to Neo-Babylonian periods. The hybrid creature is called in Sumerian IM-DUGUD, heavy storm, in Akkadian *Anzú*, the embodiment of storm-power, the enemy of the warrior-god Ningirsu. Black – Green 1992.

[331] Nimrud, North-West Palace: Mallowan 1966, 522 figs 428, 456, 475, 486, 507, 516–517, 526, 570, 579.

[332] Ziwiye (8th – 7th century BC): Godard 1950, 45 and 40 fig. 30. Ghirshman 1964a, 104–108 figs 137–138; 314–315 fig. 381. See also Loon van 1996, 177.

[333] The griffin on seals: Collon 1987, 186 fig. 893–894. Collon 1995, 32 fig. 16. Westenholz 2004, 33–34 fig. 153, 156. Achaemenid seal images of Daskyleion: Kaptan 2002, 61–62, 102–103. More comprehensive: Litvinskij – Pičikian 1995, 118–125.

[334] Tillya Tepe, tomb 5 (4th century BC): Sarianidi 1985, 54, 253 fig. 74. Hiebert – Cambon 2008, 283–196 fig. 132 – Begram, room 13 (1st century AD): Hiebert – Cambon 2008, fig. 209. [+ On Begram see Morris 2020 and 2021 with refs.].

[335] Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, inventory no. MIK I 86: The Gandharan relief of a lion-griffin decorates a stair raiser of a Buddhist sanctuary, Northwest Pakistan, ca. 1st century AD: Thiele (ed.) 1962, no. 136. Czuma 1985 no. 91. Hansen – Wieczorek – Tellenbach 2009, cat. no. 341. – Andandheri: Dani 1968–1969, 58–59 pl. 21b, 22, 23a,b. – Ashraf Khan – Hasan – Lone 2005, 254–256 nos 332–336.

[336] [+ This sentence on the Kashmiri bronze was partially rephrased] Pal 1984, 290 no. 156. Pal 1988, 64–65 fig. 9. Fussman 1993, 49 pl. 34. suggests a date of 650 AD.

In Scythian iconography the composite creature represents also a significant feature, which is spread from the North Pontic area to the Altai.[339] It has been assumed that the Scythians became familiar with this motif through their contacts with the Urartians during the 7th century BC, but there it obviously was adopted from Syria, in whose art repertoire there was a particular liking for phantastic animals since the second millennium BC. As a bronze figure it formed a furniture element found in the Ḫaldi temple at Toprakkale. The griffin appears as well in relief on bronze belts and as an image in stamp seals.[340] In Scythian art the lion-griffin is depicted with a lion head and paws, and the feet of the eagle-griffin are normally shown as talons. The aggressive and protective nature of the beast as an apotropaic symbol and its connection with remote regions in Central Asia and India are described by different classical authors. Aischylos in his Prometheus (803) called them the "sharp beaked dumb hounds of Zeus". The griffins of Apollo are the guardians of gold in the land of the one-eyed Arimaspians, who settled in the north of the Issedonians as neighbours of the Massagetae between the Araxes and the Altai mountains (Hdt. I 201, IV 27). According to Pausanias "the griffins […] fight for the gold with the Arimaspians beyond the Issedones" (*Description of Greece* I, 24.5–6). A combat scene between Scythians and these mythical creatures, which adorns a golden headdress in Graeco-Scythian style dating to the second half of the 4th century BC, has been connected by Artamonov with the legend of the Arimaspians fighting against griffins. The *kalathos* was found in the grave of a possible priestess of Demeter in the kurgan of Bol'šaja Blisnitsa in the Krasnodar region on the Taman peninsula, which together with the Crimea separates the Sea of Azov (Maiotis) from the Black Sea (Pontus Euxeinos).[341] The image of the eagle-headed griffin appeared in the North Pontic zone in the 6th century BC and became widespread throughout that region and the Kuban during the 5th and 4th century BC. Gold plaques from Maikop showing this creature display all features of the Kuban variant of the Animal Style.[342] The myth of the one-eyed Arimaspians fighting against griffins, as narrated in the Epos Arimaspeia or Grypomachy by Aristeas of Proconnesus (late 7th century BC), found its artistic expression in the Greek sepulchral symbolism ever since the 6th century BC on vases from Kertch and Tarent in southern Italy. The motif is also reproduced in a gilded Tarentine terracotta relief of the time between 325–300 BC.[343] A singular painted relief from the so-called Kaineus tomb at Limyra in Lycia, which dates around 340/330 BC, depicts the fight of the gold-guarding hyperboraean animals, the symbols of the light of the Apollonian world, against the attacking Arimaspians, the symbols of evil, in an impressive representation.[344]

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[337] Goepper 1996, 78 [+ on the elephant in South Asian art, see Srivastava 1989].

[338] Ham 2010, 69, 77–78 with photos.

[339] Jettmar 1964, 30, 49, 98–99, 102, 198. Artamonov 1970, 22 pl. 30 (Kelermes), fig. 86, pl. 160 (Solocha), fig. 93, 116, pl. 162, 169 (Čertomlyk), fig. 134, pl. 190 (Alexandropol), pl. 209, 225, 242 (Kul-Oba). Reeder 1999, 123–125 no. 19–21 (Novosilky kurgan 4 and Perep'iatykha).

[340] Loon van 1996, 91 pl. 15; 123, 140, 147–150.

It is noteworthy that the griffin motif occurs in no other area in such a multiplicity of renderings than in the mythical land of the "gold-guarding griffins" around the Altai. It has been generally noted that the fabulous creature does not appear on the rich art objects from both Aržan kurgans, which date to the early Scythian period. Besides the depiction of predators such as felines, wolves and birds of prey, the griffins are shown in great abundance on the gold objects, weapons and horse trappings from the Filippovka kurgans in the foothills of the Ural Mountains.[345]

In the period being discussed, lion- and eagle-griffins were also depicted, although not very many in general and found exclusively in barrows 1 and 2. There are lion-griffins from barrow 1 in the crests of the horse headdresses and on two saddle-covers, and from barrow 2 – on a copper pendant, on the torque and on a leather cover. Eagle-griffins appear in barrow 1 on two saddle-covers and in barrow 2 on a saddle-cover and on copper plates adorning dress. There are a large number of griffin heads on pendants and on bridle cheek-pieces. The motif of a big-eared eagle-griffin with comb was very widespread in the High Altai. The forelocks on the head are a characteristic feature of the griffin motif in the Altai. The toothed comb running along the whole neck of the griffin is an ancient form in Assyria, also in Achaemenid Persia.[346]

In spite of their varying attitudes, the horned and winged lion-griffins are of one type: all have a lion's body, horns usually with knobs on the end, a tail with brush obligatorily lifted up, and wings with their tips directed forward. A distinctive peculiarity of the lion-griffins is their static posture, even when they are shown attacking a goat or an elk. In marked contrast are the sharp and lively leopards or tigers when they attack an ungulate. Depending on function and material from which they were made the individual lion-griffins varied, but all unchangingly repeat the basic peculiarities of these monstrous creatures. Eagle-griffins as a rule have a lion's body, or more precisely a tiger's or leopard's body, with a large-eared griffin's head and wings. The griffin is without any doubt a motif derived from Hither Asia, the horned lion-griffin being known only to Persian art: the capitals in Persepolis, the tile friezes in Susa, and the cylinders showing a lion-griffin of Achaemenid times. The griffin was borrowed from Assyria and Babylon, although the creature in Pazyryk is especially Persian. However, this motif originally penetrated into Central Asia and the High Altai long before Persian rule in Hither Asia (Rudenko 1970, 256–262).

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[341] Artamonov 1970, 46 pl. 284–285.

[342] Leskov 2008, 51 no. 59; 53–54 no. 63; 146 no. 187, especially p. 251–252.

[343] Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem: Westenholz 2004, 189 no. 157.

[344] Borchhardt ed. 1990, 122–123 no. 4.

[345] Aruz – Farkas – Alekseev – Korolka 2000, 28–29. See also the ornament of a double-headed griffin from kurgan 27: Yablónskiĭ et al. 2008, 45 no. 122.

[346] + Here HH added a reference to a site and a publication: "Tuektin. Rudenko 1958".

Famous are the images of the magical griffin and sphinx made of appliqué felt or leather to decorate saddle covers and masks for horses, which were found in the Great Ulagan Valley in the eastern part of High Altai in Pazyryk kurgans 1 and 2, dated to the 4th – 3rd century BC.[347] A favourite theme of this genre shows mythical predators attacking herbivores. An openwork composition of copper from barrow 2 covered with gold-leaf shows eagle-griffins, and a neck torque from the same burial is adorned with horned lion-griffins. In their shape they have an analogy in the gold recumbent griffin in the Oxus Treasure. Leather cut-out griffins and heads decorate riding outfits from barrow 1. Eagle-griffins represented as attacking a lion-griffin, elk or ibex are seen in the appliqué work in dyed felt on saddle-covers from barrow 1, and on a horse-mask such a creature is depicted struggling with a tiger. The mythical creature also appears among the skin-tattoos of the lord buried in kurgan 2. The overwhelming diversity in varied decoration showing this creature in a local Pazyryk style as an apotropaic or magic sign or even as a symbol of power finds analogies in the Biysk kurgan. In barrow 11 at Berel' in East Kazakhstan there is also a wooden figure.[348]

The tradition of depicting mythical monsters continued also in the period of the Hsiung-nu Empire. A similar magnificent array of felt floor and ceiling carpets were found in kurgans in the Noin Ula Mountains on the Selenga River, which flows into the Baikal Sea in northern Mongolia.[349] The large kurgan concentrations of Noin Ula, Czun modė in Mongolia, are situated ca. 100 km north of Ulan Bator. Lion-griffins involved in animal combat scenes in Sarmatian animal style appear in appliqué technique on a felt carpet from barrow 6. The burial is dated to the 1st century BC. Lion- and bird-griffins occur also as embroidery on another carpet and on

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[347] [+ Here HH added this note: "(late 4th – early 3rd?)"]. Rudenko 1951, 23–24 pl. V, 1. Rudenko 1970, 78 fig. 28; 103 fig. 46; 107–108 fig. 50, pl. 68 D, E; 140 pl. 81; 142 pl. 86, A, B; 179 pl. 120; 231, 233–235 fig. 113, 115, 252, pls 168 B, 169 A, 170. Burkett 1979, 9–15 fig. 4.

[348] Biysk: Rudenko 1970, 242 pl. 136. Berel': Samašev – Faizov – Bazarbaeva 2001, 17, 36–38 fig. 13, 30. Samašev – Bazarbaeva – Žumabekova 2002, 254–263 fig. 14, 1–2; 15, 3. Samašev – Mylnikov 2004, 75–76 fig. 306–311.

[349] Rudenko 1962a, 56 fig. 48, pl. 39–45. Rudenko 1969, 70–71, 106 fig. 48, pl. 44–45. Jettmar 1964, 146–158 (griffin applied onto felt carpet from kurgan 6: 154 fig. p. 156). Burkett 1979, 13 fig. 5, pl. 15. For the other embroideries from kurgan 6 and 24: Rudenko 1969, 74–75 fig. 60, pls 46, 2; 47; 67, 1–2. On mythical animals, see Rudenko 1958.

Chinese silk cloth found in barrows 6 and 24. The composition and style of the combat scenes even of the details resemble similar sujets on the bronze or gold plaques from the Xiongnu barrows at Dėrestuj in the Trans-Baikal region (2nd – 1st century BC), Ordos and the Altai.[350]

The function of the "gold-protecting griffins" in the remote home of the Issedonians could also be associated with the role of the legendary gold-digging ants, which live in the north of India (Hdt. III 103–105).

4.3 Winged horses

The motif of the winged horse as rendered in Thalpan is known from Near Eastern iconography already by the first half of the second millennium BC. It occurs sporadically in Middle Assyrian glyptic.[351] In the Neo-Assyrian period the winged horse was associated with the sun-god Šamaš. The motif appeared also in Achaemenid art,[352] but since the Sasanian period it was widespread from Mesopotamia to Central Asia.[353] The winged horse as motif was also adopted by Hsiung-nu artists. It adorns a golden sheet from the Ballod-kurgan in Noin Ula and resembles in style the same sujet as on bronzes from Ordos.[354] In kurgan 6 in Noin Ula it occurs also on Chinese silk cloth, so it is not clear whether the motif of winged animals in Chinese art was adopted by the Hsiung-nu or vice-versa. But apparently later than in the Near East, it became really popular in the classical world as the mythological flying horse Pegasus in art and poetry. As symbol of the sun god it is described by Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* VII, 3), when during the offering ceremony of Kyros the Great horses were sacrificed to the sun god. The horse guides as emissary of death also the noble deceased to the beyond. This tradition is also passed down by Herodotus (Hdt. I 98) pertaining to the Massagetae, the "*Sakā tigraxaudā*": "The sun is the only god whom they worship; to him they sacrifice horses; the reason of it is that he is the swiftest of the gods and therefore they give him the swiftest of mortal things". The relation of the horse with the heavens as is obvious in the ancient Near East and classical antiquity is also true for the (winged) horse images in the Upper Indus region.

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[350] Rudenko 1958, 106–108. Rudenko 1969, 67, 69–71 fig. 58 and 153–154. Dėrestuj: Jettmar 1964, 146, fig. 108. [+ Here was left an incomplete quotation: "Combat scenes Noin Ula imitations of more perfect western models…Rud.[enko] 1958, 121"].

[351] Frankfort 1939, 198, 201 pl. 35c. Collon 1987, fig. 282.

[352] Boardman 1970, 29, 33 no. 113.

[353] + Here HH left this note: "(N. C. Ritter, Göbl, Tonbullen That). The latter being a Hittite site (see Herbordt et al. 2011)".

[354] Rudenko 1969, 53, 66, 74 pl. 35,4 (Ballod kurgan), 74 fig. 59 a–b, pl. 46, 2 (Noin Ula)

4.4 *Iranian warriors along the Upper Indus?*

The "Altar Rock" at Thalpan, which represents the most prominent group of rocks at the ascent from the sandy plain to the caravan path on a higher terrace leading westward to Ziyarat and Thakot, displays on its southern façade the most striking figural drawings of Persian style (Thalpan 30:51, 64, 125). They impressively testify the presence of Iranians in this remote part of the upper Indus region after the annexation of the most eastern province Gadara by the Achaemenid Empire. The "bulwark-like rocks" according to Jettmar "have been used as a pre-Buddhist sanctuary" where an altar was erected.[355] After their discovery in 1979 he saw in the specific stylistic expression of the warrior figures obvious relations to Achaemenid representation, but Edith Porada pointed out to him elements of the costume as being "late Parthian". The images therefore were described by Dani as "Parthian soldiers in typical Parthian dress", and "in their typical attire in the act of hunting",[356] as well as by Jettmar as warriors clothed in a "late-Parthian costume", but later more convincingly as West Iranian warriors of the early Achaemenid period.

A warrior is depicted apparently in attacking position with raised right arm and in the lowered left arm a lance in the hand. His breast and shoulders are seen frontally, the head and feet from the side. He wears the usual dome-shaped cap or helmet and is dressed in a long-sleeved, tight-fitting, knee-length belted tunic *(sarapis)* with an elaborate pattern and hemmed with tassels. The upper part of the dress is decorated with dots, the lower parts with a net pattern. This so-called normal Medic costume is completed by tight trousers and low boots, attached by straps, thus forming the garment of steppe-people, such as the Saka who were accustomed to horse-riding. The eastern gown, known from the reliefs of Persepolis, also came into fashion in the Achaemenid Empire and spread as far as the western Persian satrapies of Asia Minor, where the characteristic dress was displayed by persons of higher rank and priesthood.[357]

The nearest equivalent garment is worn by a "lance-bearer" on a gold votive plaque in the famous Oxus Treasure, which was reported by A. Cunningham, the founder of the Archaeological Survey of India, to have been discovered in 1877 at the fortress Takht-i Kuwad on the northern bank of the Oxus (Amu-Darya) in Bactria.[358] Finally, the Soviet excavations of 1976 to 1991 at the 'stony fortress' Takht-i Sangīn, situated ca. 5 km north of Takht-i Kuwad at the confluence of the affluents Vaxš and Pāndž to the Amu-Darya, successfully proved the original provenance of the treasure at the monumental temple of the river god Vaxš (Oxus). The Zoroastrian sanctuary was founded at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 3rd century BC and was in use during the Graeco-Bactrian period (ca. 250 BC – 10 AD). An older part of the huge treasure is dated to the 7th – 6th century BC, which may have been transferred from an Achaemenid forerunner of the later fire temple. To this Achaemenid assemblage belong gold sheeted scabbards and hilts of *akinakes*, the fragment of a rhyton and 50 rectangular engraved gold plaques, which clearly confirm the interpretation of the whole assemblage as a votive depository having analogies in the discovered Oxus temple. The plaques reveal images of donors such as priests, warriors and women, or sacred animals such as a camel and two horses. Plaque no. 48 with a more elaborately embossed male figure of high rank holding a bundle of ritual rods, the *barsom* in Middle Persian or the Avestan *baresman*, the significant attribute of a Zoroastrian priest. It was brought in connection with similar representations of magicians or simply Zoroastrian priests in Median and Achaemenid art with many counterparts all over the empire.[359] The magicians, originally a Median tribe

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[355] During the documentation of the 'Altar Rock" along its southern front, the sand dunes had to be removed more than 1 m deep. Pottery fragments of the typical 'Thalpan ware' were found, but no architectural remains. Jettmar 1980b, 183–184 Taf. 9, 1; 1980c, 203 fig. 3, 4; 1980d, 124 pl. 1; 1983a, 161 fig. 5–6; 2002, 97 fig. 6. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13–14 pl. 5. Dani 1983a, 64–66 fig. 47–48; 1995, 67 with fig. on p. 68 and 70. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 38–39 fig. 1, 3; 54–55 fig. 10, 12. MANP 6, no. 30:51, 64, 125. For comparisons of motifs in Achaemenid style, see also Francfort 2013, 131–145.

[356] Dani 1983a, 64–66; 1988, 97 fig. 19; 1995, 67.

[357] Durugönül 1994, 6–7. Calmeyer 1988, 27–53.

[358] The first publication of the Oxus Treasure is owed to Cunningham 1881. For the 51 gold plaques, see: Dalton 1905, 22–23 no. 73–75 pl. 15. A better illustration of the relevant plaque is given by

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Ghirshman 1994b, 90–94 fig. 122. He located the finding place at the fortress of Takht-i Kuwad following Barnett 1968. The discussion about the contradictory history of the treasure's discovery, its way from its finding place to the bazaars of Peshawar and Rawalpindi in 1878 and its final transfer to the British Museum in 1897, and at last its actual localization and assembly at the temple of the river god *vaxš* (Oxus) at Takht-i Sangin in South Tadžikistan has been summarized by Pičikjan 1992 and Litvinskij – Pičikjan 2002, 1–7. The recovery of the Oxus treasure is reviewed by Curtis 2004, who prefers more likely the Takht-i Kubad as find-spot. Muscarella 2003 described all gold plaques as "born in the bazaar phenomena" and therefore as "most modern forgeries".

[359] Dalton 1905, 19 pl. 14. Ghirshman 1964a, 91 fig. 109. The authenticity of plaque no. 48 is discredited by details such as the priest's *bašlyk* misunderstood by the engraver, as pointed out by Huff 2011, 88–100. Curtis 2004, 317–331 fig. 2–3 presented for plaque OT 48 convincing counter arguments against Muscarella's statement that the image "of poorly articulated 'Achaemenian' style' is faked (Muscarella 2003). Referring to scientific analysis of the plaques Curtis does not believe "there is any basis on stylistic or iconographic grounds for dismissing it as a fake." (Curtis 2004: 335). The barsom-holding royal persons on about 6 of 300 gold plaques of the so-called 'Bactrian Treasure' in the Miho Museum in Japan reveal also details which are inappropriate to Achaemenid *magos* images and are regarded not "as genuinely antique": Huff 2011. 92 fig. 6–7; 99 footnote 101. – Relief Kal-i Dāvūd below the Median rock tomb in Dukkān-i Dāvūd near Sar-i Pul in Kirman showing a *magos* with a tiara on his head and holding a *barsom* bunch: Ghirshman 1964a, 87 fig. 112. Gall 1974, 139–140 fig. 2 suggests a date in Achaemenid period. The relief at the entrance to the tomb of Ravansar, 57 km northwest of Kirmanshah, shows perhaps a *magos* with a *barsom* or more likely a noble making a sacrifice: Calmeyer 1978, 78–85 fig. 4 pl. 17. Persepolis, imprints of seal 20: Gall 1988, 565 fig. 5a and private collection: Gall 1988, 565 pl. 33b. – Other representations of *magoi* are the gold statuette of the Oxus treasure (Dalton 1905, 2 no. 2), a bronze figure from a tomb at Lidar Höyük, the reliefs on an altar base from Bünyan near Kayseri in Cappadocia (Bittel 1952; 1956. Akurgal 1961, 174 fig. 120. Gall 1988, 571 pl. 34, Karagöz 2005, fig. 1–3. Diler 2017, 296 fig. 7), from

at the Achaemenid court, held the office as protectors of the king's tomb (Arr. *Anab.* VI 29,7, the *magoi* mentioned by Hdt. I 132).

In Achaemenid iconography both the ethnic and the social position of a person is clearly defined by his headgear. The dome cap is a component of the highland garment as worn since the late Neo-Elamite period of the 7th to 6th centuries, similar to the well-fitted headdress worn by the Elamite king Te'umman (ca. 664–653 BC). This headdress differs from the more bulbous cap with a band hanging down behind, as worn by Humban-haltaš III / Ummanaldasi (646–645 BC). Both kings are portrayed on Assyrian palace reliefs of Ashurbanipal and Sennacherib at Niniveh, showing the famous battle at the Ulai River at Tell Tuba in 653 BC.[360] The warrior apparently represents a 'lance-bearer' *(aršibara)*, who together with the bow-bearers *(vaččačbara)* formed the infantry of the Persian army as described by Herodotus (Hdt. VII, 55) about the crossing of the Hellespont by the army of Xerxes. The famous "immortals" *(anauša)* were also armed with a spear that had gold pomegranates at the shaft-end, as reported by Heracleides of Cyme (FHG II, 95–96 and Diodorus XVII, 59, 3). The 10,000 immortal warriors formed the backbone of the Persian army (Hdt. VII, 83). The first regiment with one thousand of them was recruited from the sons of the Persian nobility, which represented the personal guard of the great king in the palace and his escort during the campaigns. The friezes of the Apadāna at Persepolis depict royal bodyguards according to their order of rank and distinction through their different costume and weaponry, either with bows, quivers, shields, short swords and spears, or exclusively with long lances ending in such pomegranates.[361] The reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadāna, the Audience Hall, and the northern doors of the "Hall of One Hundred Columns", the Throne Hall, provide the information that the lance-bearers in the so-called Medic costume together with the "Susian" bodyguards wearing a *strophion* (a tiara) belonged to a regiment of lower rank.[362] The "*doryphoroi*", emulating Kyros the Great's bodyguard, escorted the satraps and other rulers, too (Xenophon, Kyroupaideia VIII 6, 10–12). They occur also in a few narrative or battle scenes on seals and on other reliefs. On a Neo-Elamite or Achaemenid cylinder seal found in the 'Ville des Artisans' at Susa a "lance-bearer", clearly identified as a Mede by his bulbous headdress and richly decorated costume, guards a sacrificial offering in the style of a Neo-Assyrian contest scene.[363] This characteristic headdress, worn by a bearded figure, appears also on aclay sealing from the Margiana, the Murghab Delta in Turkmenistan. The lance before him could characterize him

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Daskyleion (Ergili) two funeral reliefs (Calmeyer 1978, 80 pl. 22. Nollé 1992, FIII: 35–36 pl. 14a, F VI: 38–40 pl. 15c. Karagöz 2013, 18,23,26–27,71–72 fig. 35–36. Polat 2017, 199 figs 4a–b) and an Achaemenid seal image (Akurgal 1961, 171 fig. 123. Kaptan 2002, 44 DS 100 pl. 294–296). An Achaemenid cylinder seal at Karlsruhe (inv. no. 73/113) depicts a *magos*, sitting in a dromedary-drawn chariot and holding a lotus blossom and a *barsom*: Calmeyer 1975, 13 fig. 3.

[360] Álvarez-Mon 2010, 210, 213, 220–221 fig. 11–13, 28–29, 40.

[361] Ghirshman 1964a, fig. 218, 219, 236.

[362] Calmeyer 1991, 38–39.

[363] Amiet 1972, 281 pl. 187 no. 2181; 1973, 16–17 pl. 6 no. 30. Harper – Aruz – Tallon 1992, 214 no. 152.

as soldier.[364] Regarding the stylistic expression of the figures shown in profile and their tasselled kilts, the Thalpan warriors share the same characteristics with the armed men in the combat and hunting scenes pictured on the gold bowl and the silver beaker found in Burnt Building I at Hasanlu IVB, which is dated to the 9th century BC.[365] Infantrymen carrying lances with points lowered downwards are escorting a chariot in the unique procession scene in the painted frieze on the east wall of the wooden chamber in the Tartarlı tumulus in the border region between Lydia and Phrygia.[366] The "golden pomegranates" that decorate the butts of the spears carried by the immortals are not indicated in the painting. The motif of a lance-bearer occurs also on the aforementioned unique woollen wall hanging from Šanpul (Sampula) in Khotan District, which was perhaps produced in a Graeco-Bactrian weaving after the late 3rd century BC.[367] The representation has been described as a warrior of Hellenistic appearance: in the characteristic girded costume, wearing a diadem, not a helmet, and holding a lance. The image could also be a reminiscence to the Achaemenid noble class of the royal guard. The drawing of a Persian warrior with the characteristic reversed lance at a prominent place near the strategical river crossing at Thalpan thus testifies the legacy of Achaemenid dominance even in this remote region.

The second apparently bearded figure differs from the other warrior image by its differing pose, the missing weapon, and less elaborate execution. With his left hand resting in front of the waist or broad belt and the right arm raised, the man reminded Jettmar of a dancing puppet, but the dome-shaped cap or helmet with neck guard, the similarly decorated costume with cross net in its upper part and vertical lines below the belt, as well as the trousers clearly discloses his identity as warrior.

To the same cultural influence belongs a scene with the third warrior dressed with the typical dome-shaped cap with a band hanging behind, a fringed skirt, the *sarapis* (also called *chiton mesoleukos*), with a broad belt, leggings, the so-called *anaxurides*, and putties. With upraised arm he holds a single-edged knife in his left hand, ready to slaughter a goat that he has seized with his right hand by its hindleg and with its head down. The composition obviously renders a regional variant of a common motif in Near Eastern art, especially in Achaemenid glyptics.[368] The isolated depictions of warriors in this remote area tempted Jettmar to the "romantic idea" that "soldiers of a Persian detachment posted on the eastern frontier of the

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[364] Collon 1998.

[365] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 13–14 with fig. See also Francfort 2013, 138, For the Hasanlu metal vessels, see: Winter 1980, 28 fig. 74–75. Marcus 1996, fig. 28–29.

[366] Calmeyer 1992, 10. Summerer 2008, 276–277 fig. 6, 8; 2010, 154–156 fig. 21, 28, 29.

[367] Bunker 2001. Stauffer 2007, 83–84, 213–214 cat. no. 113 (with a dating between 206 BC and 220 AD); here the figure is compared with warriors on the famous gold vessel from Kul-Oba kurgan from the 4th century BC, rendering the legend of the Scythian's origin, Schiltz 1994, 171–175 fig. 124–127). Baumer 2014, 134 fig. 100.

[368] An Assyrian cylinder seal from Babylon shows the same offering motif with the figure holding a sickle-sword: Moortgat 1940, 73 no. 731. Borsippa, Pasargadai: Collon 1987, 92 no. 425, 428.

Empire and retreating during the invasion of Alexander the Great into the sheltering mountains" could have produced their portrays. The Iranian unit posted there also had to secure the transport of the gold from the Indus, "which was an essential tribute from the easternmost provinces" of the Achaemenid Empire.[369] Their trouser suit in Median (or Persian) style with the "belt of allegiance",[370] as described by Herodotus (Hdt. I 135), was typical for horsemen from the Mediterranean coast to the Indus Valley. It recalls similar representations on the reliefs along the stairway of the Apadāna at Persepolis and on the gold plaques of the Oxus treasure. Yet, it may also be linked to the "Bactrian equipment", which is characteristic for the Dadicae soldiers in the army of Xerxes.[371] The single-edged knife that the above-mentioned warrior holds in his hand to slaughter the goat seems to be a *machaira*, which was generally considered to be a horseman's weapon. It has been regarded as a barbarian instrument used by Persians, Thracians and Scythians. This type of sword is also held by the henchman behind the Persian horseman in a battle scene on the relief of the Graeco-Persian marble sarcophagus from Çan in the eastern Troad.[372] A similar curved weapon reminding a sickle-sword is used by a man who is going to slaughter a goat, as depicted on an Achaemenid cylinder seal from the Persepolis treasury.[373] The man making the sacrificial offering is dressed in a Median costume like in the Thalpan image and contrary to this composition has grasped the animal by its neck. On the above-mentioned neo-Elamite cylinder seal, which was dated by Pierre Amiet to ca. 650 BC, a person in Babylonian dress holds behind him a single-edged knife, a sickle sword, in his right hand, ready to slaughter the goat that he has seized with his left hand by its hindleg and head-down in the same procedure as in Thalpan.[374]

Moreover, the sacrificial slaughtering scene is reminiscent of the common contest scenes in Mesopotamian glyptic, showing a mighty hunter or hero triumphing over a wild animal. This ancient Sumero-Akkadian motif of the master of animals was revived in the Neo-Assyrian glyptic in ca. 700 BC. The master of animals symbolizing divine or kingly power occurs in manifold variations in Achaemenid times.[375] Here the royal or Persian hero contends with two lions, mythical creatures or monsters such as griffins, winged lions and lion-griffins, rarely only with one adversary. In Iranian compositions the king grasps the lions and mythical animals generally at their neck or throat, sometimes also by the horns, whereas the capricorn is seized upside down by its hindleg. Thus, the scene from Thalpan could indeed reflect the most expansionist claim of the Achaemenid Empire into the remote mountains.

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[369] Jettmar 1983a, 162.

[370] + Here HH left this side note: "*Borchhardt* [+ maybe Borchhardt ed. 1990] *(zum Kostüm s. Curtis 2004, 319ff. Gropp 2009 Kasten Iran)*".

[371] Vogelsang 1992a, 195 considers the "West Iranian warrior" of Thalpan being "clothed and armed in the (Bactrian or) Scythic fashion".

[372] Tombul 2004, 771 fig. 6. Xenophon (EQ 12.11) used the term *machaira*, a synonym for *kopis*, contrary to *xyphos*, both for the recurved sabre and the falchion. More general about the spread of the *machaira*. see: Litvinskij – Pičikian 1995, 117.

[373] Schmidt 1957, pl. 15 PT 5 36.

[374] Amiet 1972, pl. 187 no. 2181; 1973, 16–17 pl. 6 no. 30.

[375] [+ HH added here "*Abgleichen fn. 496*"]. Moortgat 1940, 77–78. The scheme of the hero holding lions or a winged goat upside down by their tails or hind legs is also shown on seals: Boardman 1970, 33 no. 107–110. Collon 1987, 92 no. 425, 428. Collon 1995, 32–33. Kaptan 2002, 55–62 pl. 157.

The sacrifice scene serves as a reminder of a pre-Islamic tradition around Gilgit. Jettmar reports of a ceremony for the local goddess Murkum, held once a year, high in mountain valleys. The priest of Murkum, the only male person in a gathering of women, slaughtered a goat on an altar of stones in a sanctuary.[376]

4.5 Images of fire altars

There are only few elements in the rock art which enable us to draw conclusions about the historical situation in the mountain areas around the Upper Indus River during the last centuries BC. The most remarkable testimony of Iranian presence in the mountain region showing the characteristic fire-altar is dated to the Kuṣāṇa period. This altar form, a table with horns at the corners and a smaller wedge-shaped object in between, does not occur in Thalpan, where the other images in Achaemenid style are depicted, but in sites connected with the Sogdian trade activities as attested in Shatial.[377]

During the campaign of the Macedonian king Alexander from Baktra (Bactria) through Khyber into the eastern provinces of the Achaemenid Empire, Gadara (Ga[n]dara; Gandhāra) and Hinduš (Sindh), he entered the mountain region only after crossing the Swat River near Barikot and advancing against the stronghold of Aornos “high above the river”. The “birdless rock”, where the inhabitants of the Assacenian territory had taken refuge (Arr. *Anab.* IV 30.4), has been identified by Stein most likely with Mount Una (Urna or Unra) on the Pir Sar rocky spur in the bend (on the right bank) of the Indus River (above the valleys of Kana and Ghorband) and ca. 3 km away from Thakot [Besham] on the other side of the Indus in Kohistan.[378] Alternatively, this rock has been located at Mount Ilam (2816 m) in Buner by G. Tucci, and supporting him by P. Eggermont, and finally by L. M. Olivieri, who regarding the geographical context described by Arrian and Curtius Rufus, more convincingly suggested the location of Aornos at Mount Ilam, which dominates the Karakar Pass. After the conquest of this strategic position the road was open for the Macedonian thrust into Buner and to the Indus crossing, before reaching Taxila in 326 BC. But Alexander’s short reign and the following era of Hellenism inaugurated by the Seleucid kingdoms in Central Asia did not affect the remote world in the Upper Indus region. During this period, the Mauryan Empire arose in the Indian subcontinent and extended its predominance up to the Indus valleys.

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[376] The sanctuary in the Haramosh Valley was visited in 1958 by Jettmar 1961a, 88–91; 1965, 110–111; 2002, 6–7, 198. See also Litvinskij 2003, 58–59.

[377] Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 23. Jettmar 1988, 150–151 fig. 2. Shatial: MANP 2, 1997, 34–35 no. 17:26, 31:113, 33:18, 216:5.

[378] Tucci 1977, 52–55. Eggermont 1984, 191–200. Olivieri 1996, 64–70. Olivieri 2000 [+ see Coloru – Olivieri 2019; Tribulato – Olivieri 2017; Tribulato 2021].

Aśoka, one of the outstanding emperors of the Mauryan Dynasty (dated approximately 268 to 232 BC), who held regency at Taxila before his enthronement, successfully promoted the spread of the new doctrine of Buddhism from the subcontinent to Central Asia. His famous 14 edicts written in Kharoṣṭhī are engraved on the granite rocks of Mansehra in Hazara District, situated on the ancient route leading from Taxila to Chilas and Gilgit through the Kaghan Valley and across the 4663 m high Babusar Pass.[379] Another rock reveals a Kharoṣṭhī inscription, which includes the name of the Indo-Scythian king Maues, who reigned in the space of time between 90 and 70 BC. With the decline of Graeco-Bactrian supremacy, the emerging Parthian Empire seems to have influenced the Upper Indus region as well. A much greater impact on this area was due to the intrusion of the Iranian speaking Saka from the Central Asian steppes. As a result of tribal migrations, they were compelled by the Indo-Iranian speaking nomadic Yüeh-chih, who grazed their herds in the area between the Qilian Mountains and Dunhuang, to move to Bactria, where they terminated the supremacy of the Graeco-Bactrians in 130 BC. With the beginning of the 1st century BC, they were forced to recede farther westwards to the Indus plains. Maues (Moga), the first powerful king of the Saka (ca. 80–70/75–65 BC), was able to extend his power over Swat and Taxila into the Punjab. His reign preceded the major Indo-Scythian Dynasty of Azes that ruled a territory covering the Punjab and the Indus plains (50 BC – 30 AD). The reign of the Saka kings was succeeded by a short-lived Indo-Parthian kingdom ruled by Gondophares and his successors. He was the ruler of a vast domain, which included Arachosia, Seistan, Sindh, Gandhara and the Kabul Valley into the Paropamisadae, but his power did not extend east of the Punjab. Gondophare's reign was a period of prosperity and cultural revival of philhellenism, as evidenced by his chief seat of power at Taxila. Until now there exists only scanty and controversial evidence concerning the possible existence of local principalities controlled by Saka rulers in the mountain valleys.

5 The Early Buddhist Period in the Upper Indus Region [Tables 16.1–18.2]

The next stylistic group of rock carvings represents the first climax in the region's history, combined with the introduction of Buddhism, and the first use of inscriptions.[380] The remote part of historical Northwest India enters for the first time the pages of history. It is also the time that the people of the mountain region went through the most far-reaching transformation in their existence. The early Buddhist period, which began during the 1st century BC or after the turn of the millennium and lasted until the 3rd century AD, falls in the time of the formation of the empire of the Kuṣāṇa, one of the most significant dynasties in India's history. The reconstruction of this dynasty, which ruled for nearly 300 years, is based on the Kuṣāṇa coinage of the period between the 1st and the 4th century AD. Most of the kings' names are only known from their legends on coins, because there are no other sources from rock inscriptions or archaeological artifacts. The coin design in combination with Gandharan art reveals both the political and religious history of the Kuṣāṇa and the development of Buddhist imagery and symbolism. The Da Yüeh-chi, the Great Yüeh-chi, or Kuei-shuang, according to the annals of the Later Han (Hou Hanshu 96A. 3890-1), consists of five tribes or clans of nomadic origin, which had their residences together with their herds between the Qilian Mountains and Dunhuang in the Kan-su region of northwestern China.[381] They probably spoke an Indo-Iranian dialect. Due to the expansionist policy of the Han Dynasty to the western regions and under the pressure of the Xiongnu, the Yüeh-chi / Yuezhi were forced before 176 BC to move to the area between the Jaxartes and Oxus rivers, to present-day Uzbekistan. Sometime after 135 BC they crossed the Oxus River and conquered the northern part of Bactria, where they swept away the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom under its last king Heliocles (145–130 BC).[382]

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[379] [+ on the Aśokan edicts see Falk 2006] Fussman 1993.

[380] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 15–17; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 32–33. 40–44.

On their long trek from Kan-su to western Central Asia the Yüeh-chi / Yuezhi left a remarkable architectural and pictorial testimony of their presence in Bactria, if we follow the interpretation of Galina Anatolevna Pugachenkova, who excavated an early Kuṣāṇa palace. The ancient site of Khalchayan, which is located on the right bank of the Surkhan Darya, a northern tributary of the Oxus River, the Amu Darya, in present-day South Uzbekistan, became a centre of the Yüeh-chi / Yuezhi after their expulsion and temporary settling in ancient Bactria. The palace with its wall paintings and friezes of painted clay sculptures, depicts the triumph of a rising new power, the early Kuṣāṇa under its ruler Heraios.[383] Under his leadership the five nomadic groups were united and became known by the name of the ruling clan Kuṣāṇa. According to the excavator Pugachenkova, the palace was originally used as reception hall and later as a "house of deified ancestors" for the dynastic cult of the Kuṣāṇa. The reconstructed friezes with painted sculptures of clay in the main hall show three compositions: in the centre in frontal position the members of the ruling clan of Heraios with a Parthian ally, accompanied by their patron deities of Hellenistic and Iranian tradition: Athena, Herakles, Nike, Kybele and Mithras. The Kuṣāṇa princes of the royal families are individually portrayed by large terracotta sculptures, revealing their distinct ethnic feature and noble birth.[384] The high artistic expression of the faces as seen in the head of the sovereign and his consort, but also of a Parthian noble, provide evidence of the remarkable mastery that had been achieved by local sculptors. The sculptures clearly reveal the influence of Hellenistic imagery and represent a transitional step between Graeco-Bactrian art to the art of the heyday of the Kuṣāṇa empire with its mintage and the royal statues from Math, Shotorak and Surkh Kotal. The site of Khalchayan thus represents the first formative developmental stage during the unfolding of the dynastic Kuṣāṇa art.

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[381] For literature about the history of the Yüeh-chi, see: Tarn 1951, 275–283. Enoki – Koshelenko – Haidary 1994. Huntington 2001, 125 [+ I am not sure about the reference to S. Huntington's work. HH originally listed Huntington 2001, which I could not find in the author's bibliography; I would suggest correcting it to a new 2001 edition of Huntington 1985]. [+ see Falk ed. 2015].

[382] The end of the Greek rule in Bactria is dated after the middle of the 2nd century BC (145 BC: see Nehru 1999/2000, 217 footnote 4.). Errington 1999/2000, 216 [+ see Mairs ed. 2021].

[383] Excavations by G. A. Pugachenkova 1959–1963: Pugachenkova 1971, 71 with reconstruction of the battle scene. Pugachenkova 1979, 90 fig. 103. General description of the early Kuṣāṇa site, which had a Graeco-Bactrian predecessor, and of the painted and sculptured decoration of the palace: Belenickij 1968 [Belenitskii], 101–104. Stavisky [Stawiski] 1979, 90–103. Nehru 1999–2000 and 2009. The finds are in the State Museum of History, Taškent [+ see Mode 2017 with refs.].

The sculptural frieze on the north wall depicts a dramatical battle between two different groups of cavalrymen, lightly armed archers and heavily armed warriors on armoured horses. This scene has been differently interpreted as the victory of the Kuṣāṇa over a rival nomad tribe, perhaps the Saka who probably may have preceded the new nomadic intruders in the region and were also seen as having been responsible for the overthrow of the Graeco-Bactrian regime. Pugachenkova by contrast saw in the first group of cavalrymen Kuṣāṇa warriors fighting against Bactrians.[385]

One of their rulers, Kujūla Kadphises (Kadphises I, ca. 30–78 AD) founded the dynasty and gave the name of his clan to the nation as a whole. He ultimately dominated a wide area from the Aral Sea eastwards through parts of Afghanistan and North India. His ascendancy was announced by inaugurating a bronze coinage with a similar inscription on both sides of the coin: Greek on the king's side and Kharoṣṭhī on the reverse. The first king was succeeded by his son Vima Takto (ca. 78–116 AD). The third king of the Kuṣāṇa Dynasty, Vima Kadphises (Kadphises II, ca. 116–126 AD), expanded the dynasty's realm to the Indus lowlands. He introduced a gold coinage to India which portrays a powerful ruler defining a new Kuṣāṇa identity and abandoning the former practise of imitating Greek coins. A monumental statue of a enthroned Kuṣāṇa ruler from the dynastic sanctuary at Math near Mathura, which resembles the seated figure on a terracotta medallion from Khalchayan probably portrays this king.[386]

At its climax with the fourth member of the dynasty, Kaṇiṣka (ca. 127–153 AD), the empire covered a territory extending from Samarkand and Bactria to the Ganges River and Sindh. From its new capital Puruṣapura (Peshawar) emperor Kaṇiṣka, the most powerful ruler of this dynasty, was able to incorporate also the important territory of Kashmir including the Upper Indus region under his reign. It was in Kashmir during the 1st to 2nd century AD, where Kaṇiṣka, king of Gandhara, convened the fourth Council of Buddhist faith "in the four-hundredth year after the *nirvāṇa* of the Tathāgata" (i.e. Buddha, the 'Thus-Arrived' or 'Perfect One').[387] The political situation, the Kuṣāṇa pax, brought to a vast territory between the great cultural spheres China of the Han Dynasty, the Persian and Romano-Hellenic Middle East, and classical India a new cosmopolitan element in which different ethnicities – Central Asian nomads, Saka, Bactrian Greeks and Persians as well as Indian groups – were integrated. Owing to the peaceful dominion the Kuṣāṇa controlled a major part of the continental caravan and maritime commercial traffic routes between the East Mediterranean world with Arabia in the west and China and India in the east, a valuable source of remarkable prosperity to the empire. Due to its strong state unity the Kuṣāṇa was able to guarantee a trade traffic monopoly, which was vulnerable to political vicissitudes and imponderable environmental alterations. The central part of the Silk Routes with its gateway on both sides of the Pamir to China ran through the territory of the Kuṣāṇa. In the inscription on his portrait statue in Māṭ he calls himself "the Great King, the King of Kings, the Son of God Kaṇiṣka", whose legendary personality and political power as conqueror was compared with that of Akbar of the Moghul Dynasty, the idealized universal monarch *(cakravartin)* of later historical tradition (1556–1605), or the Mongolian Great Khan Qubilai (ruler 1260–1294). As one of the major figures of Asian history he is seen as "a second Aśoka, patron of Buddhist faith and energetic builder of religious works".[388] Owing to his royal patronage the Mathura and Gandhara schools of art experienced their flourish.[389]

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[384] Pugachenkova 1971, 48, 57–58; 130–131 fig. 50, 53 (no. 6), 61, 63–64 (no. 56), 68 (no. 58). Stavisky [Stawiski] 1979, fig. 68 (Kuṣāṇa ruler), 69 (consort), 71 (Parthian noble).

[385] Pugachenkova 1971, 71, 131. Stavisky [Stawiski] 1979, 101 with text figure. Nehru 1999–2000, 219 and 2009, 193–194.

[386] Pugachenkova 1971, 52, 132 fig. 130 (Math) and fig. 54 (Khalchayan). Pugachenkova 1979, 105 fig. 122. Stavisky [Stawiski] 1979, 90 fig. 67 (Math) and fig. 75 (Khalchayan, clay medallion). Belenickij 1968 [Belenitskii], 103 emphasized the stylistic resemblance between the stone figure from Math and the Khalchayan medallion figure. The ruler is seated on a lion throne and is dressed in the same costume, a girded tunic, and wearing a pointed hat. He even saw in the figure a later reproduction of the famous stone statue of Math [+ on the imagery of Surkh Kothal and new archaeological and iconographic interpretations see Olivieri – Sinisi 2021].

The precise dates for the era of the Great Kuṣāṇa, from its commencement in 78 AD, the beginning of the Saka period, or more likely from around 134/142 AD until its collapse in 278 AD, are still being disputed. The accession to the throne by Kaṇiṣka coincides with a period between 120/128 AD (one of the possible dates) and 145–150, but a date of 144 AD has been proposed.[390] Furthermore, there is still no agreement about the end of the later Kuṣāṇa caused by the Sasanian emperor Shapur II (310–379 AD).[391] The geographic position of the Indo-Scythian Empire, controlling the trade routes between China, Iran and the Roman east Mediterranean provinces, made it the very centre of economic and political power in Central and South Asia. Here influences from the west were absorbed and transformed into the characteristic art which flourished since the reign of Kujūla Kadphises and his successors.

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[387] According Xuanzang: Beal 1884, I: 117, 151–153. The other Buddhist councils are believed to have held at Rājgir around 483 BC, after the death of Buddha Śākyamuni, at Vaiśālī around 390 BC, at Pāṭaliputra, held by Aśoka around 247 BC [+ on the *pax kushanica* see Tucci 1977, 49–50].

[388] Rosenfield 1967, 29.

[389] + Here HH left a note: "Eskenazi, *Sculture dell'India classica*" [= Vitali 1983].

[390] Bussagli 1996, 223.

[391] + Here references are missing. Readers should refer here to mainly Falk ed. 2015.

The sudden penetration of the new religion Buddhism into the region around the important bridge-head of Chilas and Thalpan is manifested in the rock art by the appearance of the first inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, the depiction of ceremonial buildings and other religious symbols. Narrative scenes with figures of enthroned rulers in the centre and armed horsemen in Scythian dress reveal the process of taking possession of this strategic point below the pass of Babusar and the river crossing, from which the route network across the Karakorum and to Kashmir could be controlled. From the military standpoint, by controlling the Upper Indus region the new power could tax the gold-washers, who had been panning for the river gold certainly since the Achaemenid period.

The sites between Shatial and Chilas as far as Gor, and also at Alam Bridge and the "Sacred Rocks" of Haldeikish in Hunza include inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī in great number.[392] This script – clearly derived from Aramaic, the official lingua franca of the Persian state chancelleries – was introduced either by the Achaemenids in the satrapies on the eastern periphery of their empire or during the Maurya Dynasty (320–185 BC) under the kings Candragupta or Aśoka.[393] Kharoṣṭhī in fully developed form appears in the famous rock edict inscriptions at Shahbazgarhi in the Peshawar Valley and at Mansehra in Hazara. Until now Aramaic inscriptions of the Achaemenid period are not known, neither in Ga(n)dara nor Hinduš, and in Greek or Persian sources no Achaemenid officials are attested in the regional centres of these satrapies. The script there was used for official documents mainly in the middle-Indian language Gandhari at the court of the Graeco-Indian and Indo-Scythian kings (3rd – 4th century AD).[394] Most of the inscriptions reveal names of visitors, for example, travellers and monks, or persons who ordered or even produced the images such as the stupa veneration scenes. The names of these persons – with one exception – could never be attributed to a rāja or mahārāja, or have any noble or royal title.[395]

Three main concentrations of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions are known from the Upper Indus region: at Hunza-Haldeikish and Alam Bridge, but the most remarkable accumulation is known from the Indus Valley site Chilas II. All three sites are located at a ford or characterized by their strategical position on a main route. Fussman connected the site of Chilas II with a camp of traders "waiting for an easy crossing of the river, or from turning back to the plains after a time of rest passed in the shadow of the rock-shelters, near to the river where their animals found a watering place".[396] The site was rather both the meeting-place of a large clan of Chilasis and a sacral site for its ritual practices. The majority of the inscriptions are in Kharoṣṭhī, which belong to the most ancient along the Upper Indus, dating from around the beginning of our era and the time of the Kuṣāṇa Empire between the reign of King Vima

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[392] Fussman 1993.

[393] + Here HH left the annotation: "*(s. Graf in AMIT 32, 81)*" [= Graf (2000)].

[394] + Also here references are missing. Readers should refer to Salomon 2018.

[395] Fussman 1989, 30.

[396] Jettmar 1989c, XXXII, 182 [+ quote originally left in the text].

Kadphises and Vasudeva II, the last ruler of the house of Kaṇiṣka. There are also a few later inscriptions in Brāhmī.

The spectacular imagery with different ritual scenes together with the inscriptions of Chilas II manifest a syncretism of the great religions Buddhism and Hinduism [Table 16.1–2]. Inscribed there are the names of Hindu deities such as *Kṛṣṇa*, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, and his elder brother Balarāma, the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu. Some of the personal names are Buddhist, but "a slave of Śiva" *(Śiva-rakṣita)* clearly belongs to a Hindu, who designed a stupa on the rock.[397] Some names appear several times: Buddhagupta (2), Buddharakṣita (3), Samudra (3) (i.e. ocean, with variants Samudra-gupta, Samudra-datta or Guṇa-samudra), Rāhula (6), which could be connected with horsemen originating from historical Northwest India or Gandhara (Fussman 1989, 32). Dani translated an inscription at Chilas II as "establishment of Hārītī". The equation of this name with the goddess Hārītī herself, the patroness of children, was not confirmed by Fussman. He proposed Hārītī as part of a proper name which is related to a female demon called Hārītī, a later member of the Buddhist pantheon.

Exceptional is the composite inscription from Chilas-Buto Gah dating to the 5th century with the first part in Brāhmī and the second part in Kharoṣṭhī: "This is the pious gift [signed by] Vijaya-priya [the beloved of victory], the king of the Ribeṃdhatha-race". Fussman saw in this person a prestigious lord of a lineage, which provided one of the chieftains of the community around Chilas.[398] No other bilingual inscription exists along the Upper Indus. According to Fussman, the Kharoṣṭhī script was no longer common practice at the time when the inscription was engraved. Perhaps Vijaya-priya was a foreigner from a region, where Kharoṣṭhī was still used in ritual ceremonies. But it still survived along the southern fringe of the Tarim Basin and around the oasis town Khotan,[399] from where his aristocratic clan possibly descended.

5.1 The imagery (1)

Rock carvings from the Early Buddhist Period, which in spite of their simplicity are of high artistic quality, except for a coherent assemblage on the rock formations above the left bank of the Indus at Chilas II, were never found in clusters and mainly are concentrated around Chilas. The shining rock formations of Chilas II with their escarpments and niches located just below the town of Chilas and facing the river seem to have attracted pious Buddhist monks and laymen to bear witness to the new religion and to record their piety. The inscribed dedication of such a pilgrim near a stupa carving at Chilas II: "Simhaba and Dekavatraida have come to the stupa", apparently points to the existence of such a sacred monument of far-reaching importance, which should be located around the settlement of Chilas or more likely in Thalpan. These early Buddhist testimonies of religious symbols and veneration scenes accompanied by epigraphic dedications demonstrate the new historical era in this region, testifying its partial integration into the cultural and perhaps also political sphere of historical Northwest India and upper Punjab. The magic of this sacred place still affects the modern visitor. It was not "a mere summer camp of merchants or caravan leaders who arrived from Swat or the Kaghan Valley, and made a break near the bank of the Indus, before they perpetuated their journey to Kashmir or the Indian lowlands", leaving there a performance of the new belief.[400] The assemblage of different stupa renderings with armed worshippers in Saka costumes approaching the sacred monuments of adoration mediates the impression of a singular Buddhist sanctuary near the important bridge head of Chilas at a time around the beginning of our era.

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[397] Dani 1983a, 109 no. 86 and 112. *Contra*: Fussman 1989, 12.

[398] Fussman 1989, 25–26 no. 17,2 with an alternative reading of the inscription on the so-called Gondophares Rock published by Dani 1983a, 64–65 no. 46. See also Jettmar 1989c, XXXII–XXXIII.

[399] + There is an indirect reference here to e.g. the inscriptions of Miran V.

Buddhism does not seem to have been very firmly rooted among the population around Chilas. The narrative character of some scenes seems to document the taking possession of the area around Chilas by foreign lords and their new religion. A roughly sketched carving of a seated man in "meditation pose" has been described as Buddha, which would be of a strikingly early date and "can be placed in the time of Maues on palaeographical ground.[401] The inscription was translated by Dani as Budhaotasa, but his reading was altered by Fussman into the mere personal name Buddhagupta. A dating of both the image and the inscription to the period between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD remains uncertain. It has been assumed that the depiction of the Buddha "at such an early date speaks of the attempts made for this purpose here". It is obviously a quite simple drawing of a man seated cross-legged and holding a goblet beside a standing cup-bearer, suggesting a banquet scene. With his legs crossed, dressed in typical fashion and wearing a pointed cap, he clearly represents a Saka ruler and not a bodhisattva, as earlier identifications had assumed.

In the narrative scene at Chilas II apparently "a historic theme" is rendered [Table 17.1]. In the main upper part of the scene a man is seated upon a high throne on the left with a group of persons in front of him. Dani reads in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription the name of *Moga raja*, which should be identified as "the Scythian ruler Maues", and his warriors also in "Scythian dress" dragging the captured local potentate, "the defeated (fat) Gopadasa, son of Aksha", before the seated victor. Jettmar, on the contrary, saw in this scene not the "act of surrender" before a triumphant king, but a local god with people dancing and offering sacrifices.[402] The hypothetical interpretation of this scene as a representation of the region's conquest by the first Indo-Scythian ruler Moga (or Moa, his name in Kharoṣṭhī, i.e. Maues, ca. 75–65 BC) has been abandoned on the basis of a new translation of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription, but the carving clearly depicts a historical event.[403] Indeed, such a figure at Bario Das portraying a seated noble man in frontal posture with his legs crossed and holding a drinking bowl in his hand renders the representation on coins of Great King Azez himself, squatting with a sword across his knees. His reign started after 57 BC. Other carvings in Chilas II show this seated figure with a man standing in front of him, offering a bowl of wine.[404]

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[400] Fussman 1989, 32–33. [+ On a possible Buddhist monastic complex at Thalpan, see Zahir 2019].

[401] Dani 1983a, 104, 106 no. 81; 1987a, 39 pl. 11 and 1995, 51 with fig. Fussman 1989, 15, 31 pl. 17.

[402] Narrative scene of "Maues, his soldiers, and captured ruler" at Chilas II: Dani 1983a, 96 nos 72–74; 1988, fig. 14; 1995, 52 with fig. p. 57; 2001, 116; Dar 1988, 37; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 16. For the so-called inscriptions of *Moga Raja* at Chilas II, see Dani 1983a, 62, 64, 98–99, 102, 110 nos 78 and 85; 1985b; 1986, 66–67; 2001, 127). "Scythian soldiers on foot, with spear in hand and peaked cap on head, are walking towards the stupa" are seen in the famous stupa veneration scene: Dani 1983a, 100

On the basis of the two so-called "inscriptions of Moga in Chilas and carvings of Scythian soldiers there", Dani suggested that Maues leading a Saka tribe invaded Taxila "from this direction", i.e. southwards after they had crossed the Karakorum and traversed the Indus Valley route.[405] From his inscriptions and their association with Buddhist images Maues was seemingly a Buddhist at that time. They would also symbolize the control that the "Great King of Kings" Maues and his successors held in this part of the Upper Indus until the Sakas were ousted by the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares (Old Persian Vindapharna 'Winner of Glory', ca. 32–60 AD). The also presumed presence of his name, "Beloved of Vitaspa, King Gondophares", in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions near the mouth of the Buto Gah at Chilas and in Thalpan turned out to be another fallacy after the new reading by Fussman.[406] According to the fact that Maues does not occur in the Chilas inscriptions, the Saka invasion into the valley of the Upper Indus would have taken the southern route from Taxila through the Kaghan Valley.[407] According to William W. Tarn, the Saka invaded from Seistan into the lower region of the Indus. They advanced northward from Abiria, a Greek satrapy in later Middle Sindh, towards Taxila and conquered Gandhara. After the conquest of Taxila Maues took on the title "Great King of Kings" in imitation of Mithridates II of Pontus. However, there is no historical reference to a Saka invasion from the north, and also no Chinese sources according to which the Sai had passed the "Hanging Pass", the Karakorum, to enter the Upper Indus region.

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no. 76; 1995, 54 with fig. See also Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 16 pl. 9–10 without defining the soldiers as Scythians or Sakas.

[403] Fussman 1989, 23.

[404] Dani 1983a, 94 no. 71 (described as "offering a bowl to Bodhisattva"). Dani 1987a, 41 pl. 12 (not 10). The image of the seated noble man at Bario Das distinctly recalls a figure in frontal posture with the same attributes (sword and goblet) on the central part of a gold necklace from the tomb of a priestess excavated in 1987 in kurgan 10 of Kobyakovo near Rostov on the Don. The tomb dates to the Middle Sarmatian phase, late 1st – second half of the 2nd century AD: Zürich 1993, 266 no. 140.

[405] Dani 1983a, 64, 96 nos 78 and 85; 1986, 66–67, 96. His outdated reading, corrected by Fussman 1989, 23, is taken up again by Bivar 1984, 12 and Dar 1988, 37, 50 and was still retained by Dani 2001, 126–127, 133.

[406] 'Gondophares Rock' at Chilas I: Dani 1983a, 64 no. 46; 1986, 59; 1995, 59; 2001, 127–128.

[407] The question of the Saka invasion of Taxila at the time of Maues and the reference to the so-called Moga-inscription in Chilas II is discussed by Widemann 2003, 101–103.

The depicted themes in Chilas II and Bario Das showing the offering of cups of wine to a high-ranking enthroned person and dancers with musicians entertaining him find formal and iconographical parallels in narrative Gandharan art [Tables 17.1–18.2]. A relief in Buner shows a line of six musicians playing a harp, a drum and a rattle together with dancers dressed in the so-called "Scythian costume" and wearing a headgear that resembles a Phrygian cap.[408] The artists depicted on this finely carved stair-raiser relief apparently represent men of Central Asian origin, whose outward appearance differed from Kuṣāṇa. Dionysiac images with musicians, dancing and drinking scenes are applied exclusively for the stair-raisers of stupas.[409] The stairs "which correspond to the rainbow connecting heaven and earth" symbolize the ascension from the earthly world to the celestial realm, an *axis mundi* as it were. Relic worship, amorous male – female relations, music with dancing and banquet scenes of Dionysos' followers are depicted along the lower and the story of *Syāma Jātaka* and Eros along the upper stair-raisers of the main stupa at Aziz Dheri.[410] There in Gandhara the figurative scenes reflect "the dynamics between power and religious communication in the sacral space of early Buddhist Gandharan society".[411] The scenes of Chilas II thus can be interpreted as pictorial self-representations of an aristocratic habitus as seen in Gandharan court scenes and not as a suggestive ritual performance, which are described as non-Buddhist "*bacchanalia*" or Dionysiac festive celebrations of Graeco-Roman patrimony.[412]

5.2 Images of the Buddha?

Some of these figures engraved on the rock from Chilas II have been interpreted by Dani to represent Śākyamuni Buddha or Bodhisattva "as a person and not only as a symbol", thus supporting the assumption that his anthropomorphic incarnation appeared for the first time during the pre-Kuṣāṇa period and was transferred to the Indus region during the reign of Maues.[413] However, there is until now no proof for such an early depiction of Buddha as a

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[408] [+ One of the 'Buner step-risers'. See Olivieri – Iori 2021b]. Cleveland Museum: Rosenfield 1967, 216–217 fig. 58. For other panel reliefs from the stair-raiser of the great stupa at Aziz Dheri with musicians celebrating in front of a seated person, see: Nasim Khan 2010, 19 no. 4, 26–27 no. 11 (Early Kuṣāṇa period, 50–230 AD). Musicians playing percussive instruments, a harp or another chest-like instrument occur also on other Gandharan panel reliefs: Jongeward 2003, 109–110 no. 34 (figures in Hellenistic dress); Zwalf 1996, nos 330, 333, 335.

[409] Tanabe 2014, 23, 26–27 figs 5, 20, 23, 24.

[410] Nasim Khan 2010, I 117–118 figs 16, 70 pl. 155; III 3, 6,7,26–28, 36 figs 3–5 pl. 3,4,11,12,20. See also Tanabe 2014, 23–24 figs 18–24.

[411] Galli 2011, 298–317.

[412] + For more recent studies, see Filigenzi 2019, Olivieri – Iori 2021b.

[413] Dani 1983a, no. 83 ("Śākyāmuni"), no. 71, 78, 81, 87 ("Bodhisattva"); Dani 1987a, pl. 9 ("Śākyamuni") pl. 5, 10–11 ("Bodhisattva") and 1988, fig. 16 ("stupa placed on a human body and labelled Śākyamuni") and 18 ("earliest carved Buddha", 1st century BC).

"portrait" during the early Buddhist period along the Upper Indus. Portrayal representations are unusual in early Indian art and only testified by images of the Kuṣāṇa rulers. As for other founders of religions, no lifetime images exist either. Therefore, the later formed canonical Buddha images should never be called portrayals.[414] In anthropomorphic form the Buddha image appeared later than the introduction of Buddhism and the worship of stupas. His presence in early Buddhist art was only marked by means of mystical aniconic symbols through a series of images representing the life of Buddha without Buddha. Among these are particularly the four key stages of his life to be commemorated by the erection of the stupas: the lotus flower that expresses Buddha's birth and his purity, the Bodhi Tree *(bodhivṛkṣa)* beneath which Buddha had meditated and had attained redemption, the eight-spoked wheel of law *(dharmacakra)*, which symbolises Buddha's first preaching and teaching, but which is not an exclusively Buddhist sign, and the stupa signifying Buddha's death, his presence in the teaching, and Nirvana. Other depicted symbols are preferred signs such as the pillar, the empty throne *(āsana)*, again symbolising Buddha's enlightenment, the feet or single footprints of Buddha *(buddhapāda)*, revealing Buddha's presence and the effect of his teaching, the saddled horse without rider, expressing his renunciation, and the lion, expressing the achievement and power of Buddha's message.[415] Therefore, one can assume some kind of canonical restriction against depicting the Buddha in human form.[416] The so-called aniconic art can be found at monuments at sites such as Amaravati, Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanchi and Sarnath, which date between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD. Along with others these artistic elements continued to be venerated after the appearance of the Buddha image and remained popular in the imagery.[417]

The depiction on a golden medallion from grave 4 in Tillya Tepe showing a pacing man, turning a eight-spoked wheel before him, has been explained as one of the earliest, non-canonical representations of Buddha Śākyamuni.[418] The interpretation of the scene as rendering the First Sermon of Buddha in Sarnath near Benares is based on the inscription in Kharoṣṭhī *dharmcakrapravata*[*ko*] meaning "He who sets in motion the Wheel of Doctrine". The lion on the reverse symbolises the spiritual power of Buddha, and its roar awakens humanity to the call of dharma. The development of the Buddha image in human form in Gandhara and Mathura as the most revolutionary subject of their art schools is still not clear, but it appeared since the first half of the 1st century BC in a territory from Swat to Mathura, i.e. since the end of the Śāka period up to the rise of the Guptas. In this area the Buddha image became popular during the first three centuries of our era, which is referred to as the formative period of Buddhist art.[419] Yet, which school of the two schools should have credit for the creation of the Buddha image, Gandhara or Mathura, is still disputed. Chronologically with the only certainty, the personification of Buddha is attested for the first time by certain coins of the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaṇiṣka I (ca. 78–144?)[420] and bearing the inscription ΒΟΔΔΟ, dating to ca. 100 AD.[421] The reverse side of the coins depicts two types of the standing Buddha and one of the seated Maitreya, which during this time were already seen as "classical" motifs in Gandharan sculptures erected in Buddhist sanctuaries.[422] Along with the foundation of a new era and the extent of his political power, Kaṇiṣka proved himself as major protector of Buddhist faith, who disseminated its cults throughout his own realm and adjacent regions, including China. During his reign Buddhist art production reached its first peak in two main provinces. The wide region of Bactria and Gandhara is characterized by its particular style with Hellenistic-Roman and Iranian influences, and the eastern region with Mathura, some 60 miles south of Delhi as its centre, with its distinct Indian style.

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[414] The ideal portrait of mythical or symbolic figures in contrary to cult images of founders of religions is summarized by Seckel 1997, 220–225, esp. footnote 21 concerning the Buddha image.

[415] Seckel 1976, 7–10. Karlsson 1999, 11. 18–22. About aniconic signs at Amaravati, Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanchi, Sarnath, see: p. 86–145.

[416] + Also here references are missing. The image of Buddha is represented in Gandharan art from the early 1st century CE. See references in Olivieri 2022a.

[417] + Here HH left the following annotation: "see Zwalf 1985, 91f. Filigenzi 2003, 351) The lion …". All the paragraph looks like it was left in draft form.

[418] Sarianidi 1985, Hiebert – Cambon 2008, 276 fig. 118.

Attested in the Mathura Region of north-central India during the Saka period is a local tradition of image-production and sculpture.[423] The earliest inscriptional references to the erection of Buddha images *(pratimā)* date from the same period, the 1st until the 3rd centuries AD. The Mathura inscriptions mention "a Buddha statue set up", *Buddha pratimā pratiṣṭhāpitā*, or "in the votive niches Buddha images are to be set up", *āyakeṣu Buddha-vigrahāḥ sthāpayitavyā*, and a "*Boddhisattva-pratimā*".[424] In earlier literary references after the spread of Buddhism in India (after the 4th century BC) noting the erection of shrines of Buddha, there is no mention of any Lord's images. During his travel in ca. 400 AD to Śrāvastī in the kingdom of Kośala, Faxian reported the legend of "the very first of all the images (of Buddha), and that which men subsequently copied”.[425] This legendary image was set up in the Jetavana vihāra (monastery), the place from where Tathāgata ascended to the Trāyastriṁśa-heaven, the heaven of 33 Vedic gods, presided over by Lord Indra settling above Mount Meru. The monastery is located at Saheth-Maheth in the district Gonda-Bahraich of the modern federal state Uttar Pradesh. More than two hundred years later Xuanzang also visited the monastery Jetavana, in Chinese Shing-Lin, now fallen into ruins. He saw the still preserved chapel with its seated Buddha image, which does not necessarily represent the original figure carved of sandalwood.[426]

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[419] + Again a side annotation: "*(siehe Klimburg-Salter, s. Coins, Art 13)*" [= Klimburg-Salter 1999]. The paragraph is clearly left at a draft stage.

[420] + Evidently, HH still had doubts on the now widely accepted date of 127 AD (see above Falk, ed. 2015).

[421] Coomaraswamy 1927, 323. Wheeler 1949, 5–6. Ahrens 1961, 60. Bussagli 1996, 324.

[422] Fussman 1987, 68–70 fig. 1: For the standing Buddha depicted on the Kaṇiṣka coins there existed earlier prototypes such as the Buddha figure at the Bimaran casket (first half of 1st century AD), found near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. Snellgrove (ed.) 1978, 60 pl. 33b. refers to a seated figure on the reverse side of a Maues coin (1st century BC) reminding to seated Buddha figures. This figure, rather showing the ruler himself, cannot be seen as the earliest representation of Buddha in human form. [+ On this Rhy 1994 can be still considered valid].

[423] Here HH left this sentence: "Although there is no evidence that here for the first time Buddha images have been created, the existing art traditions together with literary sources suggest that Mathurā was a … than Gandhāra." It has been omitted from the text because incomplete, although it appears that HH considered Mathura more than Gandhara on this issue.

[424] Roth 1987, 300.

Other images show figures in heavy pointed tunics and baggy trousers, obviously representing the military costume of Kuṣāṇa warriors, which is derived from Iranian Parthian styles. They clearly resemble portrayals on Kuṣāṇa coins and on a few Gandharan panels.[427] Most spectacular is the comparison with the royal costume of King Kaṇiṣka (ca. 127–153 AD) as seen in his portrait statues in the Mathura Museum and from temple A in Surkh Kotal in Bactria.[428] He is dressed in a heavy topcoat, belted ornate tunic, and full-bloused shalwars.[429] The depiction of the royal statuary follows a strict symmetrical composition, which exhibits clear frontality and an idealized representation of power. The former realistic style of Graeco-Bactrian art has been abandoned. Kaṇiṣka never appears in this traditional dress on his coins, which is peculiar to the king’s costume on the coins of his predecessor Vima Kadphises.[430] The Kaṇiṣka statue is the first of imperial portrait representations to appear in India. Its inscription referring to himself as Son of God, *devaputra*, which appear also in coin inscriptions, marks the new idea of divine kingship that became used from the Gupta period onward. The distinct fashion with the wide open coat above baggy trousers expresses the affiliation to the aristocratic class of the Kuṣāṇa, as is also revealed by representations of a horseman chasing a boar in Saksanochur clay images from Kišlak Pušing, Pendžikent in Central Asia.[431] The rock images testify the physical presence of the Kuṣāṇa along the Upper Indus.[432]

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[425] Legge 1886, 56. Beal 1869, 76. Deeg 2005, 297–300, for the location of the site and the erection of the Buddha image, see: p. 150–151, 297–300.

[426] Beal 1884, I: XLVI–XLVII, 202–203; II: 4. See also Deeg 2005, 298 footnote 1469.

[427] An often depicted panel relief from Gandhara, which may have decorated a circular monument or a stupa (3rd century AD), now in the Royal Ontario Museum, shows a clear representation of six soldiers in Kuṣāṇa military dress: Jongeward 2003, 111–112 no. 35 [+ actually the Royal Ontario Museum piece is not a frieze pertaining to a circular monument, but rather a rectilinear panel pertaining to a step-riser (see Olivieri – Iori 2021b).

[428] + On Surkh Kothal see Olivieri – Sinisi 2021.

[429] Rosenfield 1967, 144, 156 fig. 2. Three stone statues from Surkh Kotal: Fussman 1983, 33, 63 fig. 11–13. – For the prototype of the royal costume on coins of Vima Kadphises, see: Rosenfield 1967, 25 type VIII pl. II, 29. Jongeward 2003, 22 fig. 6. [+ On Surkh Kotal and its statuary, see Olivieri – Sinisi 2021].

[430] + Here HH left an unmistakable “(??)”.

[431] Oxus 1989, 52–53 no. 25, 70 no. 40, 112 no. 65.

[432] + This and the following periods are left at their draft stage.

A strange anthropomorphic figure with his head “represented by a stūpa with a pinnacle on its top” at Chilas II has been interpreted by Dani as Buddha through a doubtful Kharoṣṭhī inscription translated as “of Śākyamuni”. But Martha L. Carter saw in it more likely a “frog-faced spaceman”, which is “outside the coherent evolution of Buddha imagery”.[433]

5.3 Images of the stupa (1)

Carvings from Issel Das, Basha West and from a cluster at Chilas above the Indus contain stupa images of the early Buddhist period. The earliest specimen of the squat form with a pronounced dome *(aṇḍa)* for the reliquary is of clear simplicity resembling the Sanchi type.[434] The later more developed type is derived from the classical Gandhara form “having railings, high plinths with staircase and fluttering banners on either side of the harmika”.[435] They resemble the famous three great stupas from Sanchi in Bhopal (from around the beginning of the 1st century AD), the Great Stupa or *Mahācaitya* from Amarāvatī of the Sātavāhanas period (2nd century BC – 3rd century AD) or the great Dharmarājikā stupa in Taxila,[436] possibly erected by emperor Aśoka (304–232 BC, his reign 268–232 BC) of the Mauryan Dynasty, a contemporary and highly respected neighbour of the Seleucidian king Antochos II, Theos (261–246 BC), which became the model for these earliest memorial to death, the noble morality of the Buddha.[437] In one of them, the “canonical” characteristics of a stupa are clearly articulated.[438] A stairway *(sopāna)* leads to a platform, a round base *(medhī)*, on which the main body consisting of a massive hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa*, literally ‘egg’) was constructed. The dome for the preservation of the reliquary is surmounted by a *harmikā* (a square pavilion) and a triple parasol-staff, *yaṣṭi*, which was not an essential feature of early stupas. Two- or three-layered umbrella-like discs, *chattra*, are attached to the pole, as on top of the stupa in Sanchi (three *chattra*) and as on that of Amarāvatī (two *chattra*). The Sanchi stupa is surrounded by a monumental railing, *vedikā*, with four gateways, *toraṇa*, which open the way to the circumambulatory path around the *medhī*. In the Chilas II drawing in front of the stupa stands an adorant monk with a raised incense burner, and on top of the stupa is a person with a belted dress, carrying a jug and a flag. A tree symbol and a votive stupa, framed by decorated columns with an unusual shaped capital complete the scene.[439] They resemble the monumental pillars with base slabs, whose erection is associated with Aśoka, the great proponent of Buddhist religion. They have been explained as to "serve a religious purpose as *axis mundi* and connect the heavenly sun and the waters inside the earth". An intact example with lion-topped capital of the Mauryan period still stands at Lauṛiyā Nandangaṛh in Bihar.[440] The inscription in Kharoṣṭhī, which has been dated 50 BC to 50 AD, states "this carving is made by Buddharakṣita" (a protégé of Buddha).[441] Attaching the picture of a stupa on a rock was apparently considered a good deed to substitute for a built votive stupa. This pious gesture is the explanation for the great number of carved stupas in the upper Indus valley, sometimes accompanied by the engraved devotional formula beginning with *devadharmo yaṃ*, "this is a pious donation of ...", or the short dedication *namo buddhāya* "veneration to Buddha".

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[433] Dani 1983a, 108 no. 83 and 1987a, 40 pl. 9, see in contrast: Carter 1993, 353. Fussman 1989, 21 could not confirm Dani’s reading *Saka(mu)nisa*.

[434] + Here HH left this note: “(See Spagnesi 2006, 156–159, Kottkamp [= Kottkamp 1992])”. On the stupa, architecture and nomenclature, see Olivieri 2022a.

[435] + Here a reference was added in the text “(Dani 1987 [+1987a], 40)”.

[436] + And the Dharmarājikā stupa of Butkara I (see Baums 2023).

[437] Amarāvatī in Andhra Pradesh: Knox, 1992, 23–30 fig. 9. [+ Chronologies are not updated].

[438] Chilas II: Dani 1983a, 106–116 no. 82.84.86.87.90; Thewalt 1984, 208–210 figs 4–6; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 15–17 pl. 9–11. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 40–41 no. 1–3: 60–61. Bruneau 2007, figs 2, 5, 6, 11 (type 2, 5, 7). Carvings of stupa images showing the early domed type are known from Nali Valley in Khirthar Range, Sindh: Kalhoro 2013a, 120 fig. 1.

However, at Chilas II images and names of Hindu deities, such as Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, and his elder brother Balarāma, the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu,[442] were also inscribed. Some names appear several times: Buddhagupta (2), Buddharakṣita (3), Samudra (3) (i.e. ocean, with variants Samudra-gupta, Samudra-datta or Guṇa-samudra), and Rāhula (6), which could be connected with horsemen originating from historical Northwest India or Gandhara.[443] Dani translated an inscription at Chilas II as "establishment of Hārītī". The equation of this name with the goddess Hārītī herself, the patroness of children, was not accepted by Fussman. As noted above, he proposed Hārītī as part of a proper name, which is related to a female demon called Hārītī, a later member of the Buddhist pantheon.[444]

The cult or adoration of the stupa is a popular theme also on Gandharan reliefs depicting the early type of stupa. Standing on either side is a devotee with folded hands or more worshippers.[445] The original religious function of the stupa, literally meaning 'a mound', has been explained as a memorial to the Buddha or to the saints of Buddhism, whose remains it enshrined. It also has been seen as a kind of sepulchre that had developed from a 'primitive tumulus' of pre-Buddhist time, but later recognized as a foremost 'architectural microcosm' or 'image of the universe'.[446]

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[439] + Here HH left this note: "tree symbol: a pillar with animal upon capital?".

[440] Huntington 2001, 46–47 fig. 4.4 [+ I am not sure about the reference to S. Huntington's work. HH originally listed Huntington 2001, which I could not find in the author's bibliography; I would suggest correcting it to a new 2001 edition of Huntington 1985]. Falk 2006, 184–186, about the symbolism and purpose of the pillars, see p. 139–149.

[441] Fussman 1989, 14 no. 6,1; 21 no. 12,1.

[442] Dani 1983a, 106 no. 80; 119 no. 90. Fussman 1989, 10–11 no. 3,2 called the occurrence of the names of the goddess Hārītī itself, and of several kings in the inscriptions around Chilas, as proposed by Dani, into question. For the reading of the names Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, see: Fussman 1989, 4–6.

[443] + Again a references embedded in the text: "(Fussman 1989, 32)".

[444] Dani 1983a, 114–116 no. 89 and 1987a, 40 pl. 8. The new interpretation by Fussmann 1989, 10–11 no. 3,3 was accepted by Jettmar 1999[a], 83–84 pl. 1; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 16 pl. 12.

[445] Ingholt 1957, 98–99. fig. 155, 157. Dani 1968–1969, 55 pl. 15b. Malakand Swat: Ashraf Khan – Lone 2004, 100 with fig.; Takht-i-Bahi, 2nd – 3rd century. Berlin: Yaldiz et al. 2000, 34–35 no. 52. In Peshawar Museum no. 02838: Ali – Zahir 2005, fig. 71. [+ Ali – Qazi 2008].

One of the most impressive scenes at Chilas II shows a stupa of the early type and a elaborately decorated pillar. The stupa in contrast to the simple early types shows advanced architectural forms: stairs leading to the arched gateway opening the access to the *pradakṣiṇa-patha*, and the walkway for circumambulation surrounding the [drum or first storey].[447] The depicted stupa repeats the famous Aśokan monuments Dharmarājika of Taxila, the stupa of Māṇikiāla and Butkara. Placed below the sanctuary next to the staircase is an incense burner. The pillar stands on a flat double basis, and the massif shaft ends in a canopy crowned by a possible wheel and the symbol of triratna, the three jewels of Buddhism (i.e. the Buddha, the Buddhist law *dharma*, and the monastic community *saṁgha*). On both sides of the capital is a svastika. This symbol normally is not linked with Buddhist imagery. Two tall banners hang down on both sides of the shaft, which is filled with zigzag patterns.[448] The wrapping around the wheel's upper part resembles the garland-decorated wheel-flags in Bharhut and Sanchi. Markus Mode recognized in this united architectural complex of Buddhist Gandharan art the prototype for a similar motif appearing in the famous Sogdian mourning scene in a painting in temple II at Panjikent. It shows near a domed structure in the shape of a stupa a wheel-pillar with banners in vertical position. The knowledge of this Buddhist motif is another testimony for the far-reaching links between early Sogdia and Gandhara. Merchants and missionaries from the borderlands of historical India may have brought the new Buddhist architectural concept into Sogdia. In this scene the non-Buddhist community of Sogdians and Turks mourns the death of Panjikent's heroic founder during the phase of Hunnic rule.[449] The inscription [associated to this Chilas II engraved stupa] mentions Rāhula as donator of the stupa veneration, Mijuprija as the executing engraver, and Karna, Buddhaguptra, Drubilaka and Vāṅkātaka as the other visitors.[450] They can be identified as the horsemen and mounted men approaching the sacred site. Only the picture of humped cattle is in no direct connection to the veneration scene. At Issel Das a scene shows three figures, a seated noble person, a pilgrim with a flag facing a rider on an elephant. Similarities to the coinage of Huviska: rider of an elephant, and the king resting on a kline and sitting in the nomadic position on pillows.[451] The scene may reflect a Buddhist festival, in which the royal court took part, as described by the Chinese pilgrim Faxian during his stay in the oasis of Khotan (Yutian).[452]

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[446] + Again a references embedded in the text: "(J. Irwin 1979)".

[447] + The phrase has been completed on the basis of Faccenna 2007 and Olivieri 2022a.

[448] Dani 1983a, 118 no. 94. Thewalt 1984, 208 fig. 5. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, pl. 9. Jettmar 2003, 287.

[449] Mode 1993 [+ ?], 36–37 fig. 17 and 23; 1994, 531–535 fig. 45, 4–5. [+ I am not sure about the reference to Mode. Initially HH had indicated Mode 1990, but it does not exist in the author's bibliography, unless he is referring specifically to Mode 1993, which came out in a volume from the 1991–1992 vintage (https://www.orientarch.uni-halle.de/dept/staff/mode.htm); in the bibliography HH apparently did not indicate Mode 1991, whose number of pages is different though].

[450] Fussman 1989, 7–9 no. 2, 1–10 pl. 5–9.

Monks and missionaries from the Punjab, travelling through the Khanga Valley to the north, to Swat, and across Kashmir via the Astor or Gilgit route, are said to have introduced Buddhism to the Northern Regions, which later became famous for their numerous sacred places. Images of elephants and Indian humped cattle, carved next to the earlier type of stupas, may be explained by newcomers from Gandhara. Buddhist monks and merchants were visiting the bazaars at Gilgit, Chilas, and Shatial, as well as the sanctuaries in Naupura near Gilgit, and even in Thalpan, Thor or Gichi.

A strange composition in the cliffs near the Indus at Chilas II shows three carvings, whose coherence is called in question. Their interpretations in literature are quite different, especially those by Jettmar, Thewalt and Dani. According to Jettmar, the central image shows in frontal position a squatting figure with two pairs of spread arms and widely opened legs ending in large human feet. The genitals are indicated, and the breast is covered by hanging tassels. The picture has been described also as an alienated stupa transformed into an anthropomorphic figure. Engraved to the right in the composition is the image of a cult pillar, as seen on other stupa veneration scenes, which would confirm this interpretation. But to the left of the central figure is a stupa with a circular dome, standing on a triple basis and crowned by a single umbrella. On the basis of a near-by engraved Kharoṣṭhī inscription read by Dani as Hāritī, the figure has been interpreted as representing the goddess, the patroness of the children and consort of Pāñcika, the god of wealth and king of the yakṣas. However, a new interpretation of the two inscribed lines by Fussman showed that it may point to the name of the dedicator of the image Hāritī-datta or Hāritī-rakṣita.[453] Another attempt for a most comprehensible interpretation saw in this image an empty throne, one of the aniconic symbols for Buddha himself.

Architectural remains indicating the existence of sacred buildings, such as stupas or chapels, have not been attested with reliable certainty in any Buddhist site in the lower part of the Upper Indus valley between Shatial and Raikot. Earlier field reports from the 1980ties point to three ruins of stupas at Shatial II, Thalpan I and at Hodar III [Hodur III], but no architectural documentation exists. Ruins in Thalpan apparently prove the presence of monasteries as mentioned in later Brāhmī inscriptions. The square structure in a scene of the 8th century on the Altar Rock at Thalpan (30:Q), showing eight small Buddha figures between a monumental enthroned Buddha and a square, has even been interpreted as "a poor model of a Buddhist monastery".[454] It is in this arrangement of the Buddha on one side and the square building on the other that the singular carving assumes particular significance, as it may convey to the hundred feet tall figure of Maitreya in the "valley of Ta-li-lo" and the "great monastery" there, when we remember the repeated travelogues of the Chinese pilgrims Faxian and Xuanzang. The lack of visible ruins on the sandy plain of Thalpan has been explained also by landslides, which buried settlements under gravel and sands, or even by inundations caused by mighty floods of the Indus River, which have been recorded from 1841, 1858 and 1906.[455] The most disastrous flood of 1841 also washed away the entire old village of Thalpan, which once covered the lowest terrace at the ancient and modern river crossing to Chilas.[456] At the foot of the hill, on the eastern end of the vast sandy plain, remains of the old Islamic cemetery are still visible. Because of apparently invisible remnants of Buddhist sacral buildings, Stein interpreted the exceptional "accumulation of votive gifts", such as the stupa carvings of high artistic execution around Chilas – located there are more than 3000 images – as pictorial quasi-substitutes for these votive buildings.[457] Be that as it may, the only explanation for this phenomenon is once again the lack of any systematic excavation in the entire region of Gilgit-Baltistan. During illicit diggings of 2015 in the garden area of Thalpan village, fragments of Buddhist stucco reliefs came to light. The prominent place above the deep ravine of the Kinah Gah, which turns there down to the Indus could have been the site of a large stupa, as mentioned in the inscription of Hodar. The accumulation of the stupa veneration scenes at Chilas II and especially of the later, most elaborate Buddhist scenes with inscriptions of prominent donators would be the other most spectacular indication for such a central sacred monument.

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[451] + Again a reference added: “(Göbl 1984, 64 pl. 89–101.)”.

[452] Beal 1869, 10–11. Legge 1886, 19–20. Deeg 2005, 512–513.

[453] The interpretation of the strange picture differs between Dani 1983a, 114 no. 89 and Jettmar 1980c, fig. 2. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 16 pl. 12. Jettmar 2000, 83–84 pl. 1. For the reading of the inscription, see: Fussman 1989, 10–11 no. 3,2.3 pl. 10–11, who dates the image between 70 and 200 AD. The comparison with “the first attentive foreigner in Chilas II” or even its deduction from the Bronze Age “grid-shaped or schematic female figures” at Kalbak Taš in the South Siberian Altai (Kubarev – Jacobson 1996, XIII–XIV figs 189, 192, 196) as proposed by Jettmar 2000, 81–82 figs 1–3 is not convincing.

5.4 The Indus – River of Gold

The inscriptions along the routes obviously quote their individual names, yet they never provide any clue as to the goods of the interregional trade. There is a potential for mineral sources in the high mountain area, which according to the rich metal finds originating from graves of plundered cemeteries date from the Late Bronze and Iron ages. Copper is found in a northern tributary of Payeh Gah in Satil area of the Tangir Valley.[458] The valleys of Tangir, Darel, Khanbari and Dudishal, which supply crops of wheat and timber, also provide quartzite;

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[454] Dani 1983a, 160 no. 116. MANP 7, 2005, 120, 143 no. 30:151. [+ With regards to Shatial II, Thalpan I, Hodar III [Hodur III] etc. (see above), HH left a note "Thewalt 6"].

[455] Drew 1875, 414–421. Kreutzmann 2012.

[456] Dani 1983a, 7.

[457] Stein 1944, 22. Jettmar 1980b, 11. 64. Hinüber 1989b, 75.

[458] Shah et al. 1987, 12. The copper sources of Tangir Valley are at present "of little economic importance".

the available minerals include gold, copper, silver, and lead, and especially manifold gemstones. Teak wood is one of the main natural resources in the mountainous regions. The *yaka* timber brought from Gadara as mentioned by Dareios as building material for his palace in Susa may originate from there. Salt must have been one of the main goods imported from the Salt Range, lying in central Punjab between Indus and Jhelum, in the mountain region. This "rock-salt as white as rock crystal" was famous in India and Persia for its high quality.[459] In exchange, the inhabitants of the lands along the Upper Indus, known as the "Golden River or River of Gold",[460] could offer gold dust washed from the river sands. "The sands of the Indus have long been celebrated for the production of gold", especially "in the Dard country", as Cunningham noted.[461] Its tributaries such as Shyok in Baltistan, Hunza and Gilgit are described as being exploited for their gold. The rivers flowing from the Rakaposhi massif are said to be particularly rich in gold.

In the tributary list of the Achaemenid satrapies according to Herodotus (Hdt. III 90–94) the Indian satrapy, the valley of the Indus River, had to pay 360 talents of gold dust to the court of Dareios every year (Hdt. III 94). The Indians as the "by far biggest people" of the 20th satrapy in the empire occupy in the Persepolis list of nations stand in the eighteenth place. But Tarn had his doubts about "a tribute utterly out of proportion to that paid, in silver or in kind, by any other satrapy.[462]

The Chinese monk Xuanzang described the "river valley of Ta-li-lo", i.e. the region around Chilas, as producing "much gold and scented turmeric", and Po-lu-lo (Bolor or Baltistan) as

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[459] Petech 1950, 15.

[460] "Saka Itinerary": Bailey 1936, 262. Al-Bīrūnī: Said 1989, 203. "Gold is carried down by several rivers", in Curt. VIII 9.

[461] Cunningham 1854, 232–234. "Many of the streams are rich in gold, expecially those flowing from the great Rakisposh Mountain" and "The Bagrot gold-washings are celebrated for the quantity and fine quality": Biddulph 1880, 22, 44; Gazetteer 1890, 329. Lawrence 1909, 109. "The best gold" from the bed of the Bagrot and Gilgit Valley: Raverty 1878, 267 footnote; Durand 1900, 220. Curzon 2012, 74 noted during his ride along the Hunza River in 1894 "gold-washing on the banks of the river". Duncan 1906, 322–326. "The Hunza River is famous for its gold-washings; and the villagers, even with their rude appliances, extract quantities of the precious metal from the river sands": Knight 1893, 107. Gold dust is also found in the tributaries of the Indus in Baltistan. "On the banks of the Basha stream is produced more gold-dust than in any other part of Little Tibet": Vigne 1844, vol. II 287–288. As much as 100 tolas weight (37½ ounces) are said to have been found by only one village: M. 1882, 29. The Shigar Valley, "the garden of Baltistān with its wealth of fruit trees" adds to its resource gold from the sands of the river: Lawrence 1909, 11. "Along the banks of the Upper Indus produced gold of a good quality, which found its way to India and Persia": McCrindle 1927, 107. Snoy 1975, 84. The Burushaski speaking people are also described as the "people of gold" (Thomas 1935) [+ I could not identify which publication by F. W. Thomas this quotation refers to; I invite the reader here to check the bibliography updated to 1939 in Katre – Gode 1939]. "The drainage, escaping from the plains of Deosai", the tributaries of the Dras River are "bringing down gold with its waters, and gold washing is carried on just below the junction": Bates 1873, 19–20.

[462] Tarn 1951, 106.

"thanks to the quantity of gold, the country is rich in supplies".[463] "The water of the Indus", according to the *Kitāb al-Jamāhir fi Ma'rifat al-Jawāhir*, historically the first work on mineralogy, by the Iranian universal scientist Abū Raiḥan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Bīrūnī (973–1048) from Chorasmia, "is known as the River of Gold under the people of India".[464] "The Indians from Kashmir reported that the residents of *Dardar* are called *Buhtāwarān* and that these people are near Kashmir from the direction of Turkestan". This geographical circumscription clearly refers to the region inhabited by the Dards around the Upper Indus. He also describes the way to procure the gold dust from the sands by the use of mercury, as is still practised by the present-day gold-washers along the Upper Indus.

> Pits are dug at the bottom of the river at its source. Water passes over these pits which are filled with quicksilver. These pits are examined after a year has passed, and the quicksilver is found to have been converted into gold. This is because the water near the source flows at a high velocity. The water carries nuggets of gold along with the sand. These nuggets are minute and slender like the wings of the mosquito. When these particles pass over the quicksilver, the gold sticks to the quicksilver and the sand passes over.

Today, the sandy banks of the Upper Indus River between Shatial and beyond Alam Bridge are still exploited by gold-washers, the *maruts* or *soniwal*, the "people of gold".[465] They are found downstream as far as Thakot [Besham], at the gateway to the KKH, and upstream as far as Hunza and in Baltistan. More than 2000 families living mainly in villages such as Dodishal beneath the planned Diamer-Basha Dam, in the valleys of Khanbari, Thor, at Hodar, Chilas and Thalpan, Ges, Darang, Gunar Farm in the Diamer District as well as at Juglot and Bunji in the Gilgit District practise gold-panning as a source of income. During the surveys of the PGAM a striking observation was made, that never had ancient coins been found in the ruines of Buddhist sites along the Upper Indus, as Jettmar stated in an article with the title "no coins from Gilgit".[466] Also for later periods "a non-monetary economy" is attested by the payment of gold-dust which replaced the use of coins.

After Maharaja Gulāb Singh's troops from Kashmir had invaded Chilas to interrupt the raids of the Chilasis on the Kashmir-Gilgit Road in 1851, since 1860 gold dust besides other items was paid yearly as tribute by the Shinaki communities of Chilas, Darel and Hodar, and also by the people of Nager and the *thum* of Hunza to the Maharaja of Kashmir.[467] Also precious stones, gems, furs, leather, products of timber, and woollen fabrics must have been exported articles of this area. But no sizable copper, lead, tin or zinc deposits have been traced in this part of the high-mountain region or in Swat Valley,[468] nor have any ancient mine workings ever been comprehensibly reported.[469] Only Sebastiano Tusa refers to mining activities in Darel up to few decades ago concerning antimony, copper, and lead.[470] The rich hoards of bronze axes and other metal objects found there by treasure hunters could be explained by the existence of mineral sources in the valley.

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[463] Beal 1885, I 134–135.

[464] Said 1989, 203–204.

[465] The methods of gold-washing by the *maruts* have been documented since 1983 by M. Azam Chaudhary and other members of the PGAM, see: Chaudhary 1997.

[466] Jettmar 1998, 407–410.

[467] Biddulph 1880, 14–16, 25, 29 (Darel 4 tolas, [Hodar] Hodur 2 tolas, Chilas 5 tolas, Buner since 1842 had to pay 3 tolas, Nager since 1858 had to pay 21 tolas and Hunza since 1869 at least 20 tolas).

The transfer of alluvial gold mentioned in the royal charters from Susa may be connected with the famous story of the gold-digging ants, as described for the first time by Herodotus (Hdt. III 102–105). This legend is linked to the mountaineers living not far from the country Paktyike (Gandhara) around the city of Kaspatyros in the north of the land of the Indians and to the north of the uppermost part of the course of the Indus. Kaspartyros clearly refers to the name Kaspapyros according Hekataios (i.e. Kaspeiria after Ptol.) which reflects the Sanskrit name of Kashmir, Kasyapapur. This region has been identified with the land of the Derdai (Δέρδαι), who inhabit the mountains on the eastern borders, as repeated by Megasthenes (*Fragm.* XXXIX), and after him quoted by Strabo (Strab. XV.1.44). The Derdai correspond to the Dardae after Plinius (Plin. *HN* VI 67: *fertilissimi sunt auri Dardae*), the Daradrai (Δέραδραι after Ptol. *Geog.* VI, 13) or Dardanoi after Dionysus Periegeta (Dionys. Per. V 1138).

The name of the Daradas – *darad* in Sanskrit has the meaning of mountain – occurs in Sanskrit literature, as in the *Mahābhārata* and in the chronicle of Kashmir [*Rājataraṅgiṇī*]. Varāhamihira (ca. 500 AD) in his *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* (XIV, 29), mentions them with other tribes as neighbours of the Kaśmīras. Their land lies to the east of the Lambatai, the territory of Lamghan along the northern bank of the Kabul River, and of Souastene, the basin of the Souastos, i.e. Śubhavastu, (Subhāstu, Suvāstu, Swāt) or Swat, and to the north of the uppermost part of the course of the Indus along the northwest of Kashmir.

Later classical writers (Arr. *Anab.* V 4–7, Ind. XV 5–7.; Ael. *NA.* III 4; Ctesias [Phot., *Bibl.*]; Dio Chr. *Or.* XXXV 434; Plin. *HN* IX 31; Strab., XV 37, 44, 69) refer to the myth of the gold-digging ants.[471]

A remote reminiscence of the fabulous gold-digging ants has even been preserved in local fairy-tales in Ladakh.[472] Herrmann tried to identify the lands with the gold-digging ants according Greek, Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan tradition with the plain around Kargil in Ladakh (?), which is also known for its rich gold production.[473] The giant ants, which are described by

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[468] + Actually medium-size copper and iron terrains are located and superficially exploited in Upper Swat, mostly on the right bank north of Matta. In general, see Law 2006.

[469] "Chalcopyrite and malachite occur in small pockets around Gilgit, Danyor Nala, Dikut and Pasu": Chakrabarti – Lahiri 1996, 13.

[470] Tusa 1985, 185.

[471] For a summary of classical records about ancient India: McCrindle 1876–1877, 94–96. McCrindle 1901, 2–3.44.51.75.128.138.176. Ritter 1833, 657–660. Vogelsang 1989; 1992b, 10.

[472] Francke 1924.

[473] Herrmann 1938, 10–16.

Herodotus as being bigger than a fox, though not as big as a dog, have been associated for the first time by Moorcroft and C. Ritter with marmots inhabiting the high mountain areas, as can be seen in a large population in the Deosai Plateau. They are known as the long-tailed or Kashmir marmot *(Marmota caudata)* and another species, the Himalayan marmot *(Marmota himalayana)*.[474] The old people from this region north of Kargil are said "to go to the plain of Dansar to collect gold sand from the marmot burrows", because "the marmots bring up sand from underground and it has gold in it".[475] The Himalayas altogether were thought to contain gold mines, as the other form of its Greek name 'Emodos' is obviously derived from the Sanskrit term for the mountain chain *Hemādrī*, the 'golden mountains'.

6 Three Kingdoms: The Climax of Buddhism in the Northern Areas[476]

6.1 Dāradas, Little and Great Palūr[477]

During the so-called "Golden Age of Buddhism" from 5th to 8th century, the region around Chilas-Thalpan with its unique concentrations of Buddhist carvings clearly represents a political and economic as well as an important ritual centre.[478] The clustering of Buddhist imagery and inscriptions around an old ferry crossing or hanging bridge between Chilas and Thalpan marks the importance of this passage to the northern bank of the Indus River. Chilas was the seat of the political establishment and Thalpan, at the meeting point of routes leading from Hodar to Gor and through the Kiner Gah to Gilgit, was the corresponding place of a supra-regional Buddhist sanctuary and apparently also of a monastery. In Thalpan monumental remains of a terrace wall with a staircase leading to it could have served as a platform for stupas. Illicit diggings in the western part of Thalpan Village in the gardens on the ridge, which is separated from the sandy terraces by the deeply incised valley of the Kiner Gah, yielded fragments of stucco reliefs showing the seated Buddha on a lotus throne. The rendering of the image repeats the model of the figure as depicted in the rock carvings at Chilas-Jayachand and Thalpan. The reliefs could have been the decoration of a stupa which was erected on the ridge thus dominating the wide Thalpan terrace. After these discoveries in 2014, the inscription near a singular image of a seated ruler at Bario Das, which is paralleled in coin representations of Great King Azez (58–20 BC) gains sense: "The goal in view, the stūpa in view". This hint of a distant important sanctuary could refer to the Buddhist religious centre at Thalpan. Another inscription, which names the donor Amṛtendrālaṃkārasya of an outstanding scene at Hodar West, recalling chapter 11 of the Lotus *sutra*, mentions a monastery of Candrasena. His name occurs at five other sites between Shing Nala and Thor, i.e. around Chilas-Thalpan, what could also with reference of a monastery be a hint to Thalpan. The masterly execution of the scene, which in this excellence is otherwise unparalleled at Hodar, belongs to the Buddhist imagery of Chilas-Thalpan.

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[474] Roberts 1997, 330–336.

[475] Peissel 1984, 144–145.

[476] + The original title of this chapter was "The Lords of the Mountains: The Climax of Buddhism in the Northern Areas".

[477] + The original title of this paragraph was "Three Kingdoms: Dāradas, Little and Great Palūr".

[478] Jettmar 1989d; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 18–20; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 33. 42–44.

The above mentioned Chinese pilgrims' travelogues marvel at a huge wooden Maitreya statue at Ta-li-lo (To-li), which may also be the one referred to by Al-Bīrūnī (Abu-Raiḥan Muhammad, 973–1048) in his account about the "site of the Shamil (or Shamilan) idol in Kashmir" in the vicinity of the "River of Sindh", i.e. apparently the Upper Indus River.[479]

The history of the high mountain region between 5th and 8th centuries AD is determined by the existence of two kingdoms, which occupied the most powerful political unit in the region, thanks to the strategic position between the Tarim Basin and Kashmir with the southern Indian principalities.[480] The distinction between the two territories called 'Great Palūr' and 'Little Palūr' was made for the first time by the Korean pilgrim Huichao, but was not taken up again by later Tibetan or Islamic sources.[481] The area called Po-lu, which was named Bolor after Islamic sources, is mentioned in the annals of the T'ang Dynasty. Chavannes (1903) located this territory in the region of Gilgit. Since Cunningham and Chavannes the identification of Great Palūr with Baltistan and Little Palūr with Gilgit including Yasin has been generally proposed.[482] However, the definition of the exact borders of these dominions is still disputed. The discussion about whether Baltistan is the homeland of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty and Skardu its capital can only be finally concluded by inscriptions from there. In the east, the powerful state "Great Palūr" (equivalent with the later Bolōr and Balūr or Balōr in Arabic) occupied the area of Baltistan including Hunza and Astor.[483] In the west, the other important principality was "Little Palūr" (Xiao Bolu), which according to later Tibetan sources was called Bruźa. Its name ostensibly reflects the term Burusho, the people living around Hunza. Little Palūr covers the basin of Gilgit, including the tributary valley of Punial up to Yasin. Because of its strategic position at the main gateway on the route from the Tarim Basin to Kashmir and India, this region played also a key role during the Chinese-Tibetan power struggle for hegemony in the 7th and 8th century.

Denwood deviating from this localization suggested the identification of Great Palur with the basin of Gilgit and located Little Palur in Yasin.[484] But the exact geographical position of Bolor, especially of the two kingdoms, still remains disputed. A solution to this problem could only be found by systematic excavations in Yasin, the Gilgit Basin and also in Baltistan. Until now no other reference to Gilgit as being the residence of a kingdom exists, except for the Gilgit manuscripts, the Hatun inscription and the royal inscriptions on the Kashmir bronzes. Strikingly, no coinage referring to this dynasty is known; therefore, only an excavation program at central sites in Gilgit-Baltistan could help to reconstruct the settlement history of the Northern Areas, and at last of Bolor.

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[479] Said 1989, 203; Jettmar 1985a, 762 and 2002, 154.

[480] Pelliot 1959, 91–92; Jettmar 2002, 116–156.

[481] Fuchs 1939, 443–444 [+ Deeg 2010].

[482] Cunningham 1854, 34, 46–47. Chavannes [+ 1903, 1903–1904]. Tucci 1977, 72, 78. Jettmar 2002, 117.

[483] + After Hunza HH added "(?)".

[484] Denwood 2007.

Since the end of the 5th century until the beginning of the 8th century the political scenery was dominated by a dynasty that called itself the 'Palola Ṣāhi', or, in sanskritized form 'Patola Ṣāhi'.[485] Out of its centre of power in Great Palūr, the dynasty gained control over Little Palūr, and through there became connected to the domain of the Hephthalites or White Huns, who reigned over the region of Chitral. The dynasty's history is mainly based on the famous Gilgit manuscripts, and on the epigraphic evidence from a series of so-called Kashmir- or Gilgit-Bronzes with their dedicational inscriptions. Names of kings occur in the royal rock inscriptions from Danyor and Hatun,[486] including the mention of a local ruler. The rock inscriptions in the districts of Gilgit and Diamer, and even from Shigar in Baltistan, round out these patchy sources. Otherwise, this dynasty is not recorded in ancient Indian historiography. Until now a list of ca. nine kings and nine queens representing this dynasty is known of that fills the chronological frame between 6th and 8th century. On the basis of all available textual material Oskar von Hinüber convincingly regained this dynasty of the 'Lords of the Mountains', beginning during the 6th century with Somana and ending with Surendrāditya, whose name is known only from Chinese sources of the T'ang Dynasty.[487] His reign began around 720 AD and seems to have ended also with the fall of his own dynasty during the military conflicts with Tibet.

The list of rulers of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty on the basis of the until now known inscriptions has been established by von Hinüber:

Somona (6th century)
Vajrādityanandī (presumably 585–605)
Vikramādityanandī (presumably 605–625)
Surendravikramādityanandī (presumably 625–644/645)
Nandivikramādityanandī (ca. 644/645–685)
Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī (ca. 685–710)
Nandivikramādityanandī (ca. 710–715)
Su-fu-shē.li-chi-li-ni (ca. 715–720), perhaps identical with Nandivikramādityanandī
Surendrāditya (after 720)

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[485] Hinüber 2004 and 2007.

[486] Hinüber 1989a, 64. Hinüber 1993, 4–19; 2004, 65.

[487] Hinüber 2004, 85–99; 2007. The names of the rulers known until then are listed in: MANP 3, 1999, 92–93.

The chronological sequence and exact dating of the first known kings, the Ṣāhis of Palola, are based on palaeographic reasonings and thus still remain uncertain. The first Ṣāhi of Palola is Somana, whose name is attested only by a single Brāhmī inscription in Khomar Das (8:1). He may have not even belonged to the ruling Bhagadatta family in Palola.[488] Vajrādityanandī with his title *śrī paṭola deva ṣāhi*, designated as ruler and possible successor, is known from a single piece of textual evidence, which may have been a part of the Gilgit manuscripts. Vikramādityanandī, known as donor from the Gilgit manuscripts and mentioned in an inscription from Thalpan, seems to be the father of the following *śrī deva ṣāhi* named Surendravikramādityanandī. The fifth name in the line of succession is testified by a series of manifold inscriptions. Navasurendrādityanandī is mentioned in the famous Hatun inscription and the first ruler's name occurring on the Kashmir bronzes, and his successor Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī occurs in the second royal rock inscription at Danyor that forms a decree dating from February 19, 687 AD.[489] The name of his successor Nandivikramādityanandī is attested by two donor inscriptions on Kashmir bronzes dating from 714 and 715. The two following rulers of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty are known only from Chinese sources of the T'ang Dynasty. Therefore, their Sanskrit names are unknown. According to the annals of the T'ang Dynasty, Su-fu-shē.li-chi-li-ni's accession to the throne of the kingdom Pou-lu (Palola) was confirmed by the Chinese court in 717. But, because the last known date of Nandivikramādityanandī is 715, the suzerain by Chinese grace could even be identical with him. His reign lasted a short period, because in 720 his successor Su-lin-t'o-i-chih was again enthroned by the same procedure brought through the imperial legation. The Sanskrit name of this king has been reconstructed as Surendrāditya, whose name is attested by a *devadharma* (religious donation) inscription from Hodar [Hodur] (68:1: *śri Palolaṣāhi Surendrādityanandī*[*deva*]). This king ruled approximately between 720 and 725.[490] An inscription on an incense burner adds the new name *śri Śīlādityaanandīn* to the dynasty's sequence.[491]

Beside the names of the Palola Ṣāhi kings, also twelve of their queens are now known. Among them Queen Maṅgalahaṃsikā stands out from the others as a prolific donor in her highest rank for a female member of the dynasty. She is the only queen who holds the exceptional title *paramadevī* […] *bhaṭārikā*, “highest queen […] great lady”.[492] She was the wife of King Vajrādityanandī, who as second sovereign of the dynasty might have ruled between 585 to 605 AD. Her name is known from a colophon among the Gilgit manuscripts and from two inscriptions on bronzes donated by the Queen.[493]

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[488] An inscribed incense burner in Chicago bears an inscription that includes the name of the donor, Śīlādityanandīn, which according O. von Hinüber 2010, 6 "recalls the names of the Palola Ṣāhi of the Bhagadatta family such as Vajrādityanandin or Vikramādityanandin". The date of the incense burner is 532 AD and would therefore precede even the first Palola Ṣāhi, king Somana, who apparently reigned in the later part of the 6th century.

[489] Hinüber 2004, 52–57 no. 23. In the inscription on the bronze of Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī, year 82, the unusual form *deyatharmo* instead of the formula *dharma* (law, moral or religious duty) is found, and also in the name *tharmila* for Dharmila in the inscription of Thor North 132:8 (MANP 11, 2013, 253), see: Hinüber 2014, 7.

[490] Hinüber 1989a, 64–65 no. 64. MANP 3, 1999, 91–93, 305 no. 68:1.

[491] Hinüber 2010.

So far, it is still impossible to draw the border lines of the area controlled by the kingdom of the Palola Ṣāhis. Judging from the inscriptions, their dominion reached from Little Palūr as far as the northern bank of the Upper Indus River, where they came into direct contact with the third power in the Northern Areas, that of the Dāradas or Dardanoi in Sanskrit and classical sources.

6.2 The kingdom of the Dāradas

Names of rulers, which are not connected with those of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty, occur mainly in royal Brāhmī inscriptions around Chilas. The names have no additional reference to the succession of the dynasty and therefore cannot be assigned to a narrow period of time. In view of their reading by von Hinüber, the southern bank of the Indus was controlled as frontier district of the land of the Dāradas from the outpost Chilas.[494] The name of the first known ruler of the Dāradas, *Daradaraya* – Darada Rāja without revealing his real name –, is however found in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription, partly in an incomprehensible text in perhaps the non-Indian Proto-Burushaski. This inscription was found engraved near the Alam Bridge at the junction of the Gilgit River with the Indus, on the main crossroad leading from Chilas and Baltistan to the Tarim Basin via the Hunza Valley.[495] The inscription was dated by Fussman to the late phase of the Kuṣāṇa period, between the late 2nd and 4th century AD.

The next attested ruler is *rājaputra* Vaiśravaṇasena, to be dated within a space of time from the 4th / 5th to the 8th century AD. Indeed, six inscriptions alone in Chilas (Chilas Bridge 28:3) and one in Thalpan (192:1.2) at the river crossing to Chilas-Jayachand name the *daran-mahārāja*, “The Great King (in the lands) of the Dāradas, (glorious) Śrī Vaiśravaṇasena, the subduer of enemies *(śatrudamana)*”.[496] This rare title, which occurs in two inscriptions, obviously referring to a military victory in this region, as guardian of the north was bestowed only to one other person in the Upper Indus named Śri Indrabhaṭṭārka (Khomar Das 13:5). Both rulers can be dated within a period of time from the 4th to the 6th century AD, preceding the dynasty of the Palola Ṣāhi in Great Palur. In a third graffito Vaiśravaṇasena is mentioned with his ‘spiritual teacher’ *(upādhyāya)* Rudraśarma, who was established in the district *(viṣaya)* Avardī. This otherwise unknown place – according to von Hinüber – could be an ancient name of Chilas or rather of its environment.[497] Yet – more unlikely – it could be also identical with the enigmatic "Ravere of the Balūr country", which is mentioned during the campaigns in the early 9th century by the Arab commander al-Faḍl b. Sahl, vezir of al-Ma'mun, against the king of Kabul, Tibet and Kashmīr.[498] During the reign of his elder brother caliph al-Amīn (800–813), Al-Ma'mun, the second oldest son of the fifth ʻAbbāsid caliph Hārūn ar-Rašid (786–809), resided in Merw, the capital of the Persian province Ḫorāsān, as his governor of the eastern provinces of the caliphate. This war of revenge was a result of the conflict between the brothers al-Amin and al-Ma'mun, the other heir to succession. Al-Ma'mun (813–833) had formed an alliance with Central Asian kingdoms, namely the King of Kabul, the Qaghan of Tibet, the Yabghu [i.e. title of the ruler of Tukhāristān] of the Qarlugs and King Utrārbandah. The sixth ʻAbbāsid caliph al-Amin could only react against this powerful alliance by direct negotiations with the Central Asian rulers, but his death in 813 – he was murdered after the conquest of Baghdad by his brother's army – changed the political situation, and al-Ma'mun's vezir could secure the eastern border by his victorious campaigns against al-Amin's former allies. His first victim was the king of Kabul, and in a second campaign against Tibet and Kashmir he thrust "into the Wakhan and in Ravere of the country of Balūr", which could perhaps be identified with Chitral as western part of Bolor.

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[492] Hinüber 2011, 4–5.

[493] Hinüber 2007 and 2011, 5–6 fig. 2–3.

[494] Summarized in Hinüber 2004, 101–104.

[495] Fussman 1978, 18–19 no. 5, 7. Jettmar 1995, 38; 2002, 102, 191. Hinüber 2004, 102.

[496] Hinüber 1989a, 57–61 no. 59–60; 2004, 43, 101–104 and no. 17a–f. Jettmar 1995, 37; 2002, 191. MANP 6, 2003, 40 no. 28:3 and 7, 140 no. 192:1.2.

A third ruler, *ṣāhi śrī* Vajraśūra by name, occurs also in an inscription at Chilas (Chilas Bridge 36:25), and like his earlier predecessor Vaiśravaṇasena is not known from other sources. The ruler's name ending with *-vuruṣa* indicates an early form of Burushaski. He belongs to a succession of *ṣāhi* rulers without any clear connection to the earlier Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty, nor to the later Turki Śāhis or the Hindu Śāhis. The names of his functionaries, especially of the 'great treasurer' *(mahāgaṃjapati)* Khāyā Kaṃdutāṃ-vuruṣa, refer to the place Chilas, where Vajraśūra apparently was the local ruler or the governor of the Dāradas during a later phase of the eighth or even the beginning of the 9th century AD.[499] Recorded near his inscription are the names of other officials, Kṣatra-Ṣāhi Vajranandī, as well as the members of his family Siṃghaśūra and Vyāghraśūra, which reveals his prominent position. And therefore he cannot have been a mere pilgrim who visited the sacred precinct. Regarding the inscriptional evidence concerning the names from the inscriptions found at Danyor and Hatun as well as on the Kashmir bronzes, von Hinüber pointed to "the political as well as cultural difference between the 'Sanskritised' Palola Ṣāhis and the perhaps local rulers of Chilas" in the frontier district of the Dārada-kingdom, thus clearly emphasizing the existence of two Buddhist ruling houses.[500]

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[497] Hinüber 1989a, 59 reads the inscription no. 59c of the 4th – 5th century as: "The teacher of the glorious Vaiśravaṇasena, great king of the Dards, Rudraśarma, is firmly established in the district Avardī". The name *Avardī* for Chilas does not seem to be applicable, as its old name according to much later sources *Śīlathasa* after the "Saka Itinerary" and *Shiltās* after Al-Bīrūnī was much later, in the 10th – 11th centuries.

[498] Jettmar 1993b, 99–100; 2002, 139–141, 191 after Beckwith 1987, 159–162.

[499] The inscription was found by Stein in 1942 (Stein 1944, pl. Va) and published by Dani 1983a, 84 no. 63; 1985, 230–232 pl. IVb. His, sometimes doubtful, readings have been corrected in Hinüber 1989a, 61–64 no. 62; 2004, 103 no. 28. MANP 6, 2003, 54 no. 36:25. See also: Jettmar 1989a, XXVIII–XXIX.

They were the ruling lords of the Upper Indus valley, dominating a stretch on the southern bank of the River from Shatial to Chilas with the bridge-head Thalpan and farther upstream as far as the gorges beyond the Nanga Parbat. Covering an area that was wider than the lower part of the Upper Indus valley, the Dārada(s) kingdom must have been ruled from a political centre possibly located west of Kashmir, such as in Uraśā, the Hazara District, in Oḍi in the Kaghan Valley, or later in the Nilum or Kishanganga Valley, perhaps near Gurēz (Gurais).[501] Daratpurī, the town of the Dards "hidden in the mountains", should be located there. Chilas – called Sīlathasa in the so-called "Saka Itinerary" from the 10th century, and Shiltas after Al-Bīrūni[502] – in the land called Daraddeśa in the 11th century as a part of a "Bhatta-Shâh" kingdom – served as its most powerful western outpost and had the task of controlling the important trading and interregional communication network in the Upper Indus Valley. The aforementioned inscription of the Great King of the Dards, Śrī Vaiśravaṇasena, with the title "subduer of enemies" *(śatrudamana)*, apparently emphasizes the territorial claim on the region beyond the bridgehead Chilas-Thalpan. It is striking that the strategically important "Land of Dāradas", Daraddeśa, sandwiched between Bolor in the north, Kashmir in the east, and Gandhara in the south, and mentioned in the Rājataraṇgiṇī, the Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir, never occurs in Chinese sources.[503]

The fortified hill settlement Patelo Kot above the village of Hodar at the mouth of the (homonomous) Hodar Valley secures the crossing point of the main routes in the Indus Valley and the direct connection from Gilgit via Naupura through the Shinghi Valley across the mountain chains to the bridge-head of Hodar. Based on its dominant position at this important traffic junction, the fortress represents both the southern outpost and the stronghold of the dynasty of the powerful princedom Little Palur in Gilgit in the lower part of the Upper Indus Valley. There are 13 images of felines in Hodar, which because of their manes can be defined as depictions of lions; the most decorative of them seem to denote a sign of power.[504] The heraldic symbol of the Dārdana, a lion with raised paw and sometimes adorned by an astral symbol on its shoulder, is depicted at the site Hodar-Halalosh and also at Gichoi Das and Dardarbati Das.[505] The presence of these imperial symbols clearly marks the territory along this part of the Upper Indus, which was claimed by the dynasty just opposite the sphere of influence of the Dāradas kingdom with its bridge-head Chilas-Thalpan.

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[500] Hinüber 1989a, 63–64.

[501] Stein 1900, II 434–435, VII, 912. ANP 1, XXXVII f.

[502] Bailey 1936, Sachau 1888, I. 207.

[503] Stein 1900, II 505.

[504] Bandini [-König] in: MANP 3, 1999, 40–45.

[505] Hodar [Hodur]: 12:28; 26:5,27,81,124; 65:4,5. Gichoi Das: 12:16. Dardarbati Das: 5:1, 54:1, 92:1. For the "ritual tiger" at Hodur, see: Dani 1983a, 200 no. 150. Bemmann – Hauptmann 1993, 315 fig. 3. For shoulder ornaments, whirls, on lion representations, see Tanabe 1990, in Gandharan art, see Tanabe 1991, 78–81 and Bautze 1991–1992, 218–219.

Jettmar interpreted the lion motif with flower or starlike shoulder mark as a heraldic symbol of Irano-Hellenistic background, "certainly related to the whirls or whirl-stars on Sogdian silver ware". He saw in the lion motif a symbol "belonging to a lineage which dominated the valley of Hodar".[506] But according to Katsumi Tanabe, the whirl motif occurring in Egyptian and Near Eastern art since the 3rd millennium BC is first of all nothing but actual whirling hair that occurs on the shoulder of young male lions under three years in age. The image of the lion with shoulder ornament in Gandharan iconography is apparently derived from the Parthian model, because Gandharan art from the 1st to early 3rd centuries was influenced by Parthian art. The lion motif in the rock art of the Upper Indus could therefore be derived from Gandharan art, from where also the stupa type in Early Buddhist rock art sites can be deduced. However, the shoulder ornament of the later Hodar [Hodur] lions in K. Tanabe's opinion is derived from Sogdian art of the 7th – 8th centuries. The shape of the shoulder mark was probably influenced by similar representations of stars or the sun known from Buddha and bodhisattva images in Swat and Kashmir.[507] The animal with its right front paw raised, tail up and head erect is drawn together with a Buddha on a stone slab from Butkara I in Swat.[508] The piece was found isolated from any context and apparently used – intended by the master – as an experimental drawing. The lion motif occurs also during the Kuṣāṇa period on the reverse side of Kaṇiṣka coins and on temple coins from Tillya Tepe as "the lion who chased away fear", symbolizing Buddha, the lion of the Śakyas is the ethnicity of the historic Buddha.[509] This motif is well known in toreutics of the early Medieval Iranian cultural area,[510] and it also seems to have been the heraldic animal of the Dardic ruler as depicted in the so-called royal drinking scene in the murals of the Dukhang at Alchi in the Western Himalayas.[511] The motif of the lion raising its paw, which embellishes the robe and the shield of one of the attending warriors, appears on the Indus also at Khalatse in Ladakh thus documenting the claim to power in this part of the valley by the king.[512]

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[506] Jettmar 1980c, 209; 1985, 763; 1988, 156 fig. 7. The Hodar [Hodur] lions with emblem are compared with similar motifs on silver vessels of Sogdian origin: Darkevich 1976, pl. 3, 1–5, fig. 9, 2 no. 116.

[507] Ebert 1994, 294 figs 32–33 saw an equivalent of the rosette- or star-like ornament of the Hodar [Hodur] lions (MANP 3, 1999, 26:81, 65:4–5) with the lotus motif in the centre of the dome and on two steps of the lower basement engraved in the image of a large stupa with lion pillars at Shing Nala (MANP 4, 2001, 39:2). [+ Here HH added this note "*fehlt-add:* footnote for K. Tanabe, p. 259" = Tanabe 1990, the page number is wrong, Tanabe's paper end on p. 256].

[508] Faccenna 1997, 72–73 fig. 2–5 [+ see also Olivieri 2022a].

[509] Fussman 1987, 71–72 fig. 2.

[510] Marschak 1986, fig. 29.

[511] Pal 1982, 25–28 pl. D23. [+ Here HH left this incomplete note: "Goepper…" which should refer either to Goepper 1982 or Goepper 1996].

[512] + Here HH left the following incomplete sentence: "Bolōr (Baltistan) seems to have been independent until the reign of 'Dus srong (677–704) according to…".

Narrative records of the T'ang Shu and Tibetan annals refer to the clashes over the hegemony in Bolōr between the Chinese and the Tibetans.[513] Between 720 and 745 AD Tibetan armies invaded Bolōr, thus terminating the supremacy of Palola Ṣāhi rule in Baltistan. From there they even dared a thrust to Bruźa (Little Palūr), the Gilgit Basin, and went as far as the Oxus region, where the Arabs as opponent of the Chinese had taken possession. To regain Chinese supremacy in Little Palūr, an army of 10,000 cavalrymen was assembled under the command of General Kao Hsien-chi (Gao Xianzhi), a Korean, and led across the Pamir. He defeated a Tibetan army at *Lien-Yün* near present-day Sarhad in Wakhan, where he took the Tibetan fort. His principal objective in the Pamir was to regain the "control of the great Central Asian trade route" for Chinese interests.[514] After traversing the Pamir route and the Karakorum, apparently via the Darkot and Baroghil passes,[515] the Chinese army invaded the Yasin Valley, captured its capital Anuyue in 722 AD and imprisoned the Tibetan vassal king. In 737 AD (or 747?)[516] the *yabghu* of Tokharistan, i.e. the Turkic Buddhist ruler of Kundus, asked the Chinese Empire for help against an insurgent mountain chief, who as an ally of the Tibetans was breaking the communications between Gilgit and Kashmir. Kao Hsien-chi again in 747 AD[517] had to cross the Karakorum pass and to restore the former hegemony. The expeditionary force destroyed a bridge over the Gilgit River near Gupis or, as Jettmar propounded, after proceeding down the Gilgit Valley a river crossing over the Indus. This site could have been located around the Alam Bridge, at the junction of the Gilgit River with the Indus, where Tibetan inscriptions and stupa images testify Tibetan presence. After the defeat of the "Tibetan partisans" and the capture of the pro-Tibetan king, the kingdom of Little Palūr seems to have survived in a status of loyalty to the Chinese T'ang Dynasty. These Tibetan partisans apparently could have been Baltis.[518]

For the subsequent centuries there are no documents from Chinese or Tibetan sources, which would throw light on the medieval history in the Northern Areas. The "Saka Itinerary" from the time of the Kashmiri king Abhimanyugupta (958–972 AD) and the Ḥudūd al-For ʿĀlam (982 AD) deliver scanty information about this region (Bulūr reigned by a king Bulūrīn Shāh). The Khotanese Saka text, containing an itinerary from Sarikol through Gilgit and Chilas into Kashmir, refers to the "province (bāḍ) of the Prusavas", i.e. the former Bruźa. The statement, "residences belonging to the king (in Gilgit) are there in four provinces", has been interpreted that *Prūśava* covered a wide area with its great towns Gīḍagīttä (Gilgit), Sīlathasa or Sīḍathasa (Chilas), and Mangala-cakra, "the first Indian city towards Kashmir".[519] But Sten

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[513] Beckwith 1987, 30; Jettmar 2002, 122–125; Sen 2003, 30–34.

[514] Stein 1922, 114. See also Mock 2016, 122.

[515] Beckwith 1987, 30, 132–133; Jettmar 1975, 298. Jettmar 2002, 127; Tsuchiya 1998b, 54–55.

[516] + Here I left in the text HH's comment "(747 A.D.)".

[517] + I have corrected here following the suggestion left by HH: "*in 737 A.D. (eher 747?)*".

[518] + The sentence was completed by the following quote: "(see Emerson JCA 7/2, 1984, 103)" = Emerson 1984.

[519] Bailey 1936, 262–263; Jettmar 2002, 144–145. Hinüber 2004, 74–76.

Konow comparing *Prūśava* with Burusho (Burūśo) opened the way to correlate it with the region of the Burushaski speaking people.[520]

Al-Bīrūnī mentions the “mountains of Bolor and Shamilan”, which correspond to the Gilgit chains of the Hindukush and the westernmost Himalaya. This region with its towns Gilgit, Aswira (Astor) and Shiltas (Chilas) then was inhabited by “Turkish tribes who are called Bhattavaryan. Their king has the title Bhatta-Shah”.[521] This statement would have presupposed an invasion of Turkic tribes, thus altering the ethnic situation in Bolor. As Stein noted, the only explanation for Al-Bīrūnī’s information is that he did not differentiate between Turks and Tibetans, who were populating the country from Ladakh to Baltistan (Tibetan *sBal ti/sBal te/sBas ti, also Nang gong*).[522] Until the intrusion of Islam into Baltistan since the 16th century, the mountain region between Hindukush and the western Himalayas was to remain a dark corner of the Indian subcontinent. Muslim rule in Baltistan, according to Holzwarth, is evidenced as late as around 1550, when the region came under administration of Kashmir. Baltistan “along with Chitral on the far western side” seem to have served as “an early bridgehead of Muslim influence within the huge mountainous system that constitutes today’s northern Pakistan”. The introduction of Islam into the Northern Areas thus can be seen as a long-lasting process throughout the centuries from 1500 up to 1800.[523]

6.3 Ethnic diversity as revealed by inscriptions

During this period, the older Indian script Kharoṣṭhī (written from right to left) is followed by Brāhmī, the second Indian scripture, which was developed from North Indian Gupta alphabets, probably originating around the area of Mathura and Kauśambi. The script (written from left to right) was used by the Aśoka. More than 80 % of all inscriptions are written in different forms of the roundish Brāhmī, ranging from the late Kuṣāṇa to the early Gupta type of the

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[520] + Here the quote of S. Konow is missing, instead HH left the following (indirect) quote: “(Hinüber 2004, 76)”.

[521] Sachau 1888, I: 117.207.

[522] Stein 1900, II: 363. Jettmar 1970, 142. Denwood 2008, 13–15.

[523] Holzwarth 1997; 1998, 301, 325–326; 2006, 173–174. The earliest Islamic epigraphic evidence for the Northern Areas from 1548/49 found on the gate of the watchtower at the fortress of Altit corresponds with the date when the Kashmiri ruler established Muslim governors in Baltistan (Holzwarth 2006, 174). An inscription from the mosque at Thagas in the northeast of Khaplu provides with the year 1012/1603–1604 the earliest date for Baltistan (Afridi 1988, 118). The little mosque of Thagas was destroyed in 1972 (Dani 1989, 141 did not mention this inscription). The Amburiq mosque of Shigar is said to be the oldest mosque in Baltistan, built by Kashmiri craftsmen who were brought by Sayyid Ali Hamadani (1314–1384): Dani 1989, 128–130 and 2001, 229. According to local traditions the Islamisation penetrated into the upper Indus valley to Chilas in about 1750 and to Gor in about 1800 (Holzwarth 1998, 314). According Biddulph 1880, 15 “the people of Gor claim to have been Muselmans for only three generations”.

4th century. A few inscriptions, like those at Hatun in the Ishkoman Valley dating to 671, on the basis of two Kashmir bronzes, and with 44 testimonies only in Chilas-Jayachand, are executed in the less known Śāradā and Proto-Śāradā developed from Brāhmī. Proto-Śāradā was introduced during the period between 600–630 AD.

These inscriptions occur in form of captions rendering personal names, sometimes repeated several times in different places. They refer to proper persons of the local population and also of foreign origin, sometimes with the short addition "arrived here". More than 1000 different names are registered in the inscriptions, giving an impression of the multi-ethnic society, and together with the names of foreign travellers, merchants and pilgrims an idea of the important role of the crossroad between Central Asia and the subcontinent, as Jettmar designated the list of names as "Visitor's Book of the Silk Road". Of special interest are names with added titles or the profession of the person. Devotional texts according to Buddhist traditions and names of Buddhas, sometimes of rather uncommon type, are also attested.[524] The ending (suffix) *-ot(t)a* is typical for widespread names of persons inhabiting the lower part of the Upper Indus region such as names ending with *-dharma* and *-mitra*. This is true for the most important local Buddhist donors such as Kuberavāhana and Siṅhoṭa, whose names occur in inscriptions at Chilas-Jayachand and Thalpan. Kuberavāhana's name, which for the most part is written as Kueravāhana, occurs in a variation as Kuberasena also in Thakot (35:1, 51:1). Concealed behind these names may be also those of members of the ruling elite of the Dāradas territory may be concealed. Noticeably these two remarkable donors as the most prominent promotors of Buddhism at the Dardic outpost on the Upper Indus left behind their singular religious artworks in different areas in the Chilas-Thalpan basin. Siṅhoṭa's stupa donations are concentrated on the higher rock formation of Chilas-Jayachand just above the access to the river crossing, whereas the religious images commissioned by Kuberavāhana are located north of the Siṅhoṭa group and in Thalpan and also in Thakot.[525] Both men as the most prominent donors allow even an insight into their family background. An inscription on a small stone in Thalpan names even the son of Kuberavāhana, called Devavāhana (Thalpan 99:2). Siṅhoṭa appears at Chilas-Jayachand also together with another local personality Gamanaśūra,[526] and as an exceptional case even with his wife Caṃpadārikā, the "lady from Caṃpā", and his sister Pravāsusabhā as donors (Chilas Bridge 64:12). The proper name of his wife is not indicated; however, if the country of her origin would correspond with the Chamba District (ancient

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[524] + Here HH left the following quote "(Jettmar 1979b, von Hinüber 1989b)".

[525] A first compilation of donor names mentioned in Buddhist inscriptions is due to O. von Hinüber 1989b. For the naming of donor Kuberavāhana: Hinüber 1989b, 78. 86–87 inscriptions no. 70.71a.72a.73.74.81–85; MANP 6, 2003, no. 30:α, 30:A, 30:4.5.21.28; 37:A, 37:1.2.4; 38:1.2; 39:2; 42:4 (Chilas Bridge), 30:27 (Thalpan), MANP 7, 2005, no. 116:A, 116:2, 118:2, 122:A, 122:1.2 (Thalpan). – For the naming of donor Siṅhoṭa: no. 4:1; 6:A, 6:5; 20:2.15; 63:B, 63:7–9, 64:C,D; 64:12.17.18. 83:3 (Chilas Bridge).

[526] MANP 6, 2003, no. 63:7 and 83:3 (in this lost inscription Gamanaśūra appears without the main donor).

Champakā) of Himachal Pradesh, situated at the foot of the Himalayas, flanked in the east by Kashmir and in the north by Tibet, it would indicate close relations of Siṅhoṭa's family with this remote area, which is known as one of the ancient Buddhist principalities.

In addition to these two prominent promoters of Buddhism, Kuberavāhana and Siṅhoṭa, there is another group of donors. The important question, whether they were contemporaries or which position they held in the community, cannot be answered yet.

On the prominent rock face of Chilas-Jayachand in a most elaborate veneration scene of a stupa another devotee, named Priyaśūra, occurs in the accompanying Brāhmī inscription (Chilas Bridge 63:A).[527] Although names with *priya-* and *-śūra* are known in the area, this donor is only attested from this prominent place and may have been related to the elite society around the powerful Siṅhoṭa family.[528]

Around religious donations commissioned by Kuberavāhana at Thalpan the names of two other local donors are attested: Vicitradeva and Varuṇeśvara.[529] They apparently did not have the rank of the two main patrons of Buddhism, as their donations of stupas in small format and never of large Bodhisatvas or Tathāgatas clearly indicate.

There are also other donors of local origin from the wider region around Chilas-Thalpan, some occurring at several places, such as Devathoṭa and Devoṭṭaka (Thor North 112:5, 236:16), Dha[r]mota (Khomar Das 13:5), Giryoṭa (Gukona 12:1), Jīvoṭa (Thakot 70:1, 82:3), Kitoṭa (Khomar Das 56:1, 68:2, Gichoi Das 7:8), Makoṭa (Ziyarat 119:4), Miroṭa (Dardarbati Das 70:4), Śūloṭa and Vījaveṭa (Dardarbati Das 70:6; Hodar 65:14). Dharmasena (Ziyarat 16:9). But also names of foreign donors occur, such as Nandiya who venerates a stupa together with Brahmavarma (Thor North 69:2,3), or the Burushos Thāvaya-Devasiṅgha (Thor North 286:1, 288:1). Another donor is Amṛtendrālaṃkārasya, who donated the extraordinary image recalling chapter 11 of Lotus sutra at Hodar [Hodur] West. His name occurs even at five places between Shing Nala and Thor. Conspicuously personal names of local inhabitants with the ending *-ot(t)a* are repeated in many sites along the Upper Indus, with 13 namings at Hodar, nine in Oshibat, eight in Shatial, and seven in Gichi.[530]

Nasim Khan pointed out the name of *Vāsudat(t)a*, the son of Vāsutārā, which occurs several times in inscriptions together with images of stupas at Babe Diamar, a rock carving assemblage between the Karakorum Highway at the gate to the city of Chilas and the Indus River (Chilas Bridge VI 1:3; Ziyarat 219:1; Gichi; 64:1; Hodar [Hodur] 69:10 son of Varāha;

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[527] Hinüber in: MANP 6, 2003, 75–76 (inscription: 63:3). See also: Dani 1983a, 136, 182 no. 124; 1995, 64.

[528] + Here the manuscript presents a *non sequitur*, a sentence which was either left incomplete by HH or inadvertently left after a "cut and paste" Author's computer activity: "Dharmasiṃha, son of Priyananda". The sentence refers to the names with the suffix *priya-*. In fact, the sentence is completed in the following pages, where HH elaborates again, and from a different angle, on Kuberavāhana and Siṅhoṭa (and his wife Caṃpadārikā), Dharmasiṃha, son of Priyananda, etc.

[529] Hinüber 1989a, 53–54 nos 50–52; 1989b, 87.

[530] MANP 4, 2001, 384.

Shatial 121:1; Shing Nala: 59:3).[531] *Vāsudat(t)a* was the son of the Indian Vāsutārā, saluted as Baghavant, Mahārpasaka or Mahakṣatrapa and therefore belonged to a higher social class of the Chilas community. His name, inscribed by the same hand, occurs at several sites along the Upper Indus and represents the same person (Chilas Bridge 29:18, 66:3, 66:26; 66:40, Oshibat 1:4, 29:1, Shing Nala 7:2). Other names with patronymic references ending with *-tara*, *-datta* (Shatial 17:2; 31:26; 47:2), *-toda* or *-loṭa* seem to indicate, that some of the donors are close relatives and belong to the same family or clan, which occupied a higher rank in the same area during the 4th and 5th century.

Inscriptions clearly revealing Vaiṣnana names such as Ananta (Thor North 73:17), Śrī Brāhmā Vāmāna (Thakot 130:1), of Haricandra (Khomar Das 34:3), Śri Ratnaviṣṇu (Khomar Das 15:1), or Śri Rāmacandra (Khomar Das 25:1) or the travelling Brahman Jīvaśa(r)ma (Gukona 9:11), the Brahman Yaśa (Gukona 13:1) and the Vinesāma-Brahman Deva (Gukona 22:9, also Shatial 137:1, Hodar [Hodur] South 2:1), Kṛṣṇavarma (Alam Bridge 27:13), testify the presence of a Hindu group. Another Vinesāma-Brahman appears at Thalpan (142:2, 208:4), at Oshibat (56:1) and Gichoi Das (10:1). Further, Śri Iśānadeva (Thor North 204:1), Durgagupta (Khomar Das 37:1) and the Brahman Rudraśrarma, "the spiritual teacher *(upādhyāya)* of the glorious (śrī) Vaiśravaṇasena, great king of the Dards" (Chilas terrace) represent Śaiva names.[532] Brahmagupta (Gukona 22:5) is the name of a famous astronomer and mathematician.[533]

Of historical importance is an inscription of the 6th century from Khomar Das (8:1), which mentions the Palola Ṣāhi king Somana *(palola ṣāhi somana)*. He apparently is the first of the known nine kings of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty, and does not seem to have belonged to the Bhagadatta family of Palola-Paṭola-Balūr.[534] The addition *śatrudamana* to the name clearly praises a hero as "subduer of enemies", like Śri Indrabhaṭṭārka in Khomar Das (13:5) and the Great King and donator Vaiśravaṇasena in Thalpan, who adopted the title Bhattāraka (Thalpan 30:177).[535] This title was assumed by other persons along the Upper Indus who did not belong to the Palola Ṣāhi and may have held political power in their region. There are also other persons from Palola such as Yaśavarma (Shing Nala 32:2, Gukona 29:9). In this group a graffito from Gukona (49:1) mentioning Prabhadatta and Jīva "who may be victorious" could refer to clashes in an otherwise unknown political situation.

Sometimes added to the names of persons are specifications of their profession, such as their official authority or rank, caste or origin, and religious status. The names are summarized by O. von Hinüber under his type 3.[536] Professions with the exception of scribe are seldom indicated. Due to the lack of other sources, this group of graffiti shed some light on the social organisation and political situation of the local population.

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[531] Nasim Khan 2002a.

[532] Hinüber 2004, 43, 101 no. 17.

[533] + HH inserted here: "(Hilka 1910: 86)".

[534] Hinüber 2004, 47–48 Nr. 20. 85. The geographical term Palola is also attested in Shing Nala (32:2) and Hodar [Hodur] [+ Hodar; Hinüber in MANP 3, 2003, 91–92].

[535] Hinüber 2004, 111.

[536] Hinüber 1989a, 46–68.

Handed down are names of noble or rich men with their attendance, officials, warriors, Brahmans *(vrāhmaṇa)*, actors *(naṭa)*, scribes *(devīra)*, such as the repeatedly mentioned Jayacandra (Ziyarat 27:1, Thalpan 226:4, Ba Das 19:8, Shing Nala 1:1), Khukasiṃgha (Chilas Bridge 36:10) and Garoṭa (Ba Das 4:3), painters *(citrakara)*, musicians *(gāndharva)*, merchants *(vaṇik)*, caravan leaders *(sārthavāha)*, and even seers *(biprah̤)* such as Ādisoma (Khomar Das 30:4). In Proto-Śāradā inscriptions of significant historical importance at Chilas-Jayachand, the Vaiśravaṇasena inscriptions, added side by side with the local ruler of the Dārada kingdom and their *rājaputras*, are also their officials: the great minister *(mahāmatya)* Gikisiṇā, the great treasurer *(mahāgaṃjapati)* Khāyā, and the archivists *(akṣapaṭāli)* Stukatna (Chilas Bridge: 36:37,40,42) or Narendra with his title *mahākṣapaṭalādhikṛta* in the final line of the Danyor inscription, which is dated to 19 February 687.[537] The office of the *mahāgaṃjapati* occurs also in an inscription at Shatial[538] and in connection with that of the *mahāmatya* in the Hatun inscription, which can be assigned to 19 December 671. Both important exalted positions were held by the same person, Makarasiṃgha, a royal official of the Palola Ṣāhi king *ṣāhi śrī Nava-Surendrādityanandī.*[539] In Alam Bridge (14:1,2) a protégé of a minister *(amātya)* is also mentioned.[540] The list of specific professions and high officials in both royal territories give impressive evidence of the distinct hierarchical structure of the society and political organisation during the reign of the Lords of the Mountains. To the courtly household belong ministers, the treasurer, and the archivist maintaining the power of the kingship.

Female names occur in few graffiti along the Upper Indus, in sites such as Hodar only in one singular naming: Gaṇoṭṭikā and Ratnini in Gichi, Vuruṇḍi in Hodar, Prabhoṭini in Thalpan, Mṛgoṭṭikā or Varmakacandrā, and perhaps Kalyānadevi in Gukona.[541] Nāgendramīrabhaṭarikă, an apparently aristocratic lady, venerates Buddha at Thor North (83:3). Surprisingly the names of females normally occur individually, and not together with male names. But there is one exception at Thor North (116:1), where "Dirghāyu jointly appears with Ṣaṃkācarikā".

Another group of graffiti, type 2 after von Hinüber,[542] provides insight into the lively communication of the local population and foreigners between Shatial and sites east of Chilas and Thalpan. Foreign travellers marking their presence along the route, especially at resting places, added to their names the annex "wanders about", "has arrived", "came here", or "has left" (Thor North 117:9, 14, 17, 20, 21; 123:1). The travelling Amṛtendrālaṃkāra left his marks at different places on both banks of the Upper Indus. However, it is unknown from where he started his travels. He left his graffito from Shing Nala (31:1, 35:2) in the east, at Thakot (57:4), Gichi Nala (18:2), Hodar [Hodur] (26:3) as far as Thor North (404:1) downstream, testifying that it was no problem to cross the river on his travel within a distance of around 60 km. A shorter distance was laid back by Vasudatta, who travelled between Shing Nala (59:3) and Gichi Nala (64:1). Lośvaradeva is another traveller who immortalized himself on different places along his 60 km long way on the left bank of the Indus between Shatial (159:2), through Harban (25:1), Gichi (18:1) and Chilas-Jayachand (33:2), from where he crossed the bridge to reach Thalpan (148:2, 195:160) with its monastery, thus covering an equivalent distance as Amṛtendrālaṃkāra.[543] On his long march he may have crossed the river to Thor North (16:1), where he wrote his abridged name as Lośvara. If his name corresponds with the shortened form Lośvara the same person would have crossed the river earlier on his way to visit Thor North (16:1, 405:1). As wanderer worshipper – Jaicandra Buddha at Thalpan (226:4) and Saṃgha at Ba Das (19:8). Other names such as Ratnacandra occur also at different places, from Harban (3:1) and Thalpan (406:11) as far as Ba Das (466:11), and that of Dhīra, son of Bhaṭṭa is recorded from Hodar [Hodur] (6:1), Oshibat (11:2, 18:118) and Ba Das (31:2). Their travel routes attest the interaction of the inhabitants in this part of the Indus Valley and also the existence of the frequented arterial roads along both banks of the river.

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[537] Hinüber 2004, 56–57 no. 23.

[538] + Here the manuscript shows a gap originally indicated by "(...)". It can be integrated as: Hinüber in MANP 2, 1997, 60 = Shatial 4:2

[539] Hinüber 1989a, 63 and 2004, 51 no. 22.

[540] Fussman 1978, no. 14:1,2, new reading after Humbach 1980b, 103.

[541] Gichi Nala: 157:4–5, 117:1, Hodar [Hodur]: 4:1, Ziyarat 12:2, Khomar Das 68:1, Gukona 9:10; 11:4.5.

[542] Hinüber 1989a, 44–46.

The Jāṭ Jīvavarma (*jīvavarma jaṭṭa*) with this designation manifests himself as a member of the jāṭs, today a still widespread north Indian tribe. He travelled from Shatial (5:2–5) along the right bank of the Indus to Dadam Das (51:1) and Thor North (93:2), crossed from there the river to reach Gichi (142:4), and again crossing the river for a visit at the central place or town of Hodar [Hodur] (43:1,2). From this fortified place at the southern outlet of the route from Gilgit to the lower part of the Upper Indus, the southern outpost of Little Palūr territory, he followed the route on this side of the river up to Khomar Das (37.3).[544] Four persons from this region could be recognized as members of this tribe (Gichi 116:4), which is seen as one of the ancestors of the Sikhs.[545]

More than half of all names are familiar in India, but there are also a few persons with names in Gāndhārī, in Burushaski, early Ṣinā, Khotan-Saka or Iranian. Names like Kak(k)a (Thor North 355:4, 400:1) are widespread in the subcontinent. Of special interest is the occurrence of early Burushaski names ending with the epithets *(composita) -puruṣa* or *-vuruṣa*, showing an early form of the term “Burusho”, thus testifying the presence of this ethnic group during this period, now living in the area from Hunza and Nagar to Yasin. The above mentioned Proto-Śāradā inscription at Chilas-Jayachand (Chilas Bridge 36:25,35–37) names even a ruler of local importance and this ethnic background, Ṣāhi Śri Vajraśura, and with the

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[543] Shatial 159:2; 136:1, Harban 25:1, Gichi Nala 18:1; 153:4, Chilas Bridge 33:2, Thalpan 148:2; 159:160, Thor North: 16:1; 405:1.

[544] Hinüber 1989a, 47 no. 31 a/b.

[545] Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 22.

rājaputras Siṃghaśūra and Vyāghraśūra possibly his brothers.[546] Besides names with this epithet there are other Burushos like the Burusho Khuntala, the Dhiṇisu-Burusho Khukhasigha, the Sayatāṃ-Burusho Maṃgalasela and (Sudma) the Burusho Ma(s)uto in Chilas-Jayachand (Chilas Bridge 36:9,20,27,34), Khuka-jiva in Shatial (192:7), Śramaṇa Khukara in Khomar Das (11:2) and Thāvaya-Devasiṅgha (Thor North 286:1, 288:1).[547] In the inscription of Hatun, the Makarasiṃha by his ethnic attribute Kāñjdīya, he is designated as Burusho, which finds its modern equivalent Kanjūti known from Hunza-Nagar.[548]

Iranian personal names occur apart from the emporium Shatial mainly in the sites Shatial, Oshibat, Thor North, and in Gukona. They evidence the importance of the arterial road leading along the Northern bank of the Upper Indus.[549] Phatana, Guśuraspāla and Śri Rostam (Thor North 235:34,41; 235:41) are other names which range among this group of travellers. Ruveṣkapharra attests his arrival in Thor North (117:5) and in Gukona, where also another Iranian Guśuraspāla (?) is attested. Kulabhagava, son of Lośparabhaga, recorded at Gukona (22:31), could also be an Iranian. Other hybrid Indo-Iranian personal names such as Mātṛspāla (Thor North 157:1, 222:2), Yaśaspāla (Thalpan 112:22), Śīlaspāla (Minar Gah 189:2) apparently belong also to travellers and merchants and do not represent the indigenous population. Names with the suffix -*spāla* like Maghaspāla (Oshibat), Candraspāla, Dharmaspāla (Gichi), Jeṣṭaspāla (Shatial) belong to Bactrians. Names ending with the suffix -*puṇya* and -*sena* are of Central Asian origin, such as Ravvaḍasena, Soyaṃpuṇya, son of Vṛddha (Thor North 325:1,2).

Rarely the origin of a person is specified by adding a statement of place. This is the case with the merchant Loṇāka from Śri Pratāpapura (Thakot 125:1). This place is probably situated at the village Tapar near Śrinagar and was founded after 650 by Pratāpāditya II Durlabhka (ca. 636–686), the second ruler of the Kārkoṭa Dynasty, who had a 50-years long and prosperous reign in Kashmir.[550] According to Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, he was the son of the legendary king Durlabhavardhana (ca. 600–636), who is said to have descended from Karkoṭa nāga, a serpent deity. The Karkoṭa Dynasty received its name after his founder.

Less frequently recorded are names of monks *(bhikṣu)*, such as Mitragupta, the "salvific companion and spiritual adviser" (Chilas 30:4) of the prominent donator Kuberavāhana, to whom the nearby engraved *Śibi Jātaka* scene at Chilas-Jayachand is owed. Mitragupta is one of the few monks ever portrayed in a stupa veneration together with his noble patron.[551] The name of "the monk Priyamitra" occurs in three places from Thor North (49:9, 117:12), Gichi Nala (101:1, 157:3) to Chilas.[552] A novice *(śrāmaṇera)* Rāma left his graffito at Thor North

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[546] MANP 6, 2003, 54–55 no. 35:25,35–37. For the discussion of the Burusho names, see: Hinüber 1989a, 61–63 no. 62a–f.

[547] Hinüber 2004, 65, 146–147.

[548] HH added here: "(von Hinüber 2004, 146 u. no. 28)".

[549] Hinüber 1986.

[550] Ray 1970, 22, 44, 237.

[551] Hinüber 1989b, 81–82 no. 75a.

[552] Thor North: 49:9, 117:12, Gichi Nala 101:1, 157:3, Chilas V 21:1, 26:1, 42:2.

(235:45). Names of wandering monks and teachers *(upādhyāya)* are attested more frequently at the river crossing of Alam Bridge, such as the Śākā monk Satyaśreṣṭhin (22:19), the monk Palalojo with his companion Sāma (22:2,3), and again with a possibly female companion Svadūṣī (27:7).[553] Their graffiti inscribed along the ancient routes bear witness to the important role of the Upper Indus valley on their pilgrimage. Testimonies at Bargin,[554] on the northern route leading from Gor to Shing Nala are "Śri Yaśamitra travelled (here)", Kalyāṇaghoṣa in Shing Nala (40:1).

Some of the graffiti in Chilas and Minar Gah with a certain humour trace back to men, such as a *nidrotara* or *nidradharm*(*en*)*a*, slowcoach, and *Aśvadatta*, the slyboots travels.[555] Another person is accused with "having led a bad life" (Thor North 61:3).[556] Rather imbued with morbid humour is a curse inscribed on a rock in Gichi Nala (150:8).

Most frequently engraved is the devotional formula beginning with *devadharmo yaṃ*, "this is the pious donation of …", or the short dedication *namo buddhāya*, "veneration to Buddha". The donative formula appears also with the depiction of a stupa. There occur also dedications to bodhisattvas, Tathāgata, to Avalokiteśvara or Lokeśvara (Thor North 83:2). Only in an inscription from Thakot (217:1) with Cakṣuviśuddha does another name of bodhisattva and Tathāgata occur. The formula *namo buddhāya kṛtvā deśanti*, "after they have venerated Buddha, they expound the doctrine" (Thakot 93:1), is singular in the rock inscriptions. The formulas could also determine donations to Buddhist monasteries, with the purpose to worship the Buddha image installed there, to provide the *saṁgha*, the monastic community living there, and to maintain the monastic buildings itself. But the epigraphs do not specify any grants as known from donative phrases during the 5th to 9th centuries in West and East India. More seldom are venerations such as to the goddess Tārā, in Mahāyāna Buddhism the personification of the North Star and also the consort of Avalokiteśvara. The remarkable dedication, which could also adorn walls of a classical site in the Mediterranean world, *martavyaṃ smartavyaṃ*, means just *memento mori* [Table 26.2].[557]

6.4 The imagery (2) [Tables 19.1–2]

All the wealth, elegance and expressiveness of Buddhist art stand out from the rock images around Chilas and Thalpan, with their most elaborate representations of stupas, Buddhas and complex jātakas. These vibrantly depicted parables describe scenes of the previous lives of the future Buddha Śākyamuni as a Bodhisattva, the Buddha-to-be, in his search for enlightenment *(bodhi)*. Some of the carvings reveal a level of artistic mastery, which was never ever again attained later in the history of this region. These masterly chiselled pictures exhibit different styles or influences from East-Turkestan and Kashmir or fewer from India and Gandhara. These images remind of reliefs, placed as programmatic decorations around the stupas of Gandhara, representing the main events in Buddha's life, such as birth, first meditation, the great renunciation, meditation under the Bodhi Tree, the attack of king Māra and the calling-to-witness of the earth, the first preaching, in the deer-park at Benares, and the Nirvāna. "The function of these panels, as Johanna E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw observed, could be compared with that of the stations of the Cross in the Roman Catholic church, both used as illustrations of the Master's life and at the same time as a meditation object".[558] The devotional depiction of the stupa now became the predominant motif in the rock art. In contrast to earlier pictorial schemes, these stupa engravings are now characterized by a different style and significant architectural elements.[559] Above the elevated and stepped platform *(medhī)* and sometimes decorated dome *(aṇḍa)*, the *harmikā*, the row of umbrellas *(chattrāvali)* is presented in an exaggerated manner, crowned by banners and bells *(gaṇṭā)*.[560] The depiction of this votive building in such a diversity and abundance along the Indus is striking. Therefore, Stein assumed that the carving of a stupa "at the particular spot on the bank of the Indus below Chilas" and "at a much frequented ferrying-place" could be interpreted as a pious "quasi-substitute" for a votive stupa.[561] The absence of Buddhist buildings has been explained by several earthquake-induced seared heaps and spills by historically testified tidal waves of the Indus. It seems conceivable that from the beginning the cult objects of the new introduced religious movement were just the rock images, which only around Chilas and Thalpan show so many representations of Buddha and stupas in such artistically elaborate execution. Apart from a few similar images at other places along the Indus and particularly from the rich Buddhist imagery at Shing Nala, really comparable Buddhist artworks are missing in sites beyond Chilas and Thalpan. The images in Shatial, Thor or Hodar [Hodur] belong to another type. Von Hinüber proposed the reason for the renunciation of elaborate structures could be that the Buddhists were only relatively recently in the region, or that they were only able to enforce themselves inadequately against local relief traditions. However, the question can only be answered when the structure of the Buddhist settlement finally becomes visible through systematic archaeological excavations. Ruins of large buildings at Thalpan, which have been recorded during the field campaigns, indicate the existence of Buddhist sacral monuments. The striking multitude of artistically designed images of Buddha and the stupa, in particular of scenes from the former lives of the Lord and of complex jātakas, can also be explained by the fact that in Thalpan the famous miraculous statue of Maitreya, praised by Chinese pilgrims, was worshipped and at this place once stood the monastery of To-li or Ta-li-lo mentioned by Faxian and Xuanzang.

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[553] The numbers of the Alam Bridge inscriptions are quoted after Fussman 1978, but the readings are following the review of Humbach 1980b, 114, 116.

[554] MANP 4, 2001, 53 (Bargin 4).

[555] *Nidrot(t)ara*: Chilas IV 31:1, Chilas V 40:4, Chilas VI 16:120. *Aśvadattapaṭu vicarati:* Minar Gah 108:1.

[556] + Here HH addedd this note: "*(der ein schlechtes Leben führt)*".

[557] Chilas V 85:4 and Oshibat 81:2.

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[558] van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949, 108.

[559] In her study of the stupas in the petroglyphs Lorinde Ebert saw "two clearly defined" types, one dating from about 6th – 8th century, the other around 11th – 13th century: Ebert 1994. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 60–61 no. 5. MANP 6, 2003, pl. 71–73.

[560] + See Faccenna – Filigenzi 2007, Olivieri 2022a.

[561] Stein 1944, 22. Stein's "explanation of such an accumulation of votive gifts" at the ferrying-place which people proceeding from Chilas to the northern Trans-Indus valleys had to pass, are discussed by Jettmar 1980c [+ ?], 164 and Hinüber 1989b, 75.

Stupas of the type known as "stūpa of the descent from the heaven", showing a tall basement composed of receding bodies, a high pinnacle with the first *chattra* supported by struts, sometimes columns and *lokapāla*s, represent the most elaborate form in sites around Chilas-Thalpan. They share the same architectural features as a host of miniature bronze models of the "Shahi period".[562]

The singular monumental image of a stupa at Shing Nala with the addition of four free-standing columns finds a few parallels in models, such as a stupa in the Doris Wiener Collection New York.[563] The capital of the cosmic columns is surmounted by a lion, symbolizing Buddha himself – Śākyasiṃha, the lion of the Śakyas (the ethnicity of Buddha).

A striking fact is that most of the large-size depictions of sacred buildings in Chilas-Thalpan were sponsored by only two personalities named Kuberavāhana and Siṅhoṭa.[564] The images by order of the two main donors clearly differ both in style and in artistic execution. These differences might reflect also different chronological assignments, suggesting that Siṅhoṭa's engraved stupas belong to a later phase. The images chiselled by order of Siṅhoṭa are fascinating in their artistic mastery, which required a workshop with an outstanding skilfulness and a particular style. Kuberavāhana's votive carvings do not reveal an equivalent elaboration, but the hand of a highly gifted artist is evident. It is generally remarkable that the dedications of both donors are exposed in two different areas: Siṅhoṭa in a concentrated assemblage at Chilas-Yayachand, and Kuberavāhana in the north of this rock formation and by his more noticeable presence also in Thalpan. This confrontation of their dedications could also reflect the existence of two rivalling noble Dardic families in the Buddhist community of Chilas. Siṅhoṭa's pious dedications to Lokeśvara on the rock faces just above the Indus crossing to Thalpan have been cut through since the construction of the KKH. Images of a stupa with a seated Buddha Śākyamuni and a Brāhmī inscription, which have been published by Stein, have been destroyed by the road construction.[565] Both devotees, Siṅhoṭa (Chilas Bridge 64:18) and

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[562] Filigenzi 2006b. [+ See Filigenzi 2015].

[563] Pal 1984, 68 no. 68.

[564] [+ On Kuberavāhana and Siṅhoṭa see above]. Hinüber 1989b, 78. 86–87 inscription no. 70.71a. 72a.73.74.81–85. – MANP 6, 2003, no. 30:α, 30:A, 30:4.5.21.28; 37:A, 37:1.2.4; 38:1.2; 39:2; 42:4 (Chilas Bridge), 30:27 (Thalpan), MANP 7, 2005, no. 116:A, 116:2, 118:2, 122:A, 122:1.2 (Thalpan) and Siṅhoṭa: no. 4:1; 6:A, 6:5; 20:2.15; 63:B, 63:7–9, 64:C,D; 64:12.17.18. 83:3 (Chilas Bridge). See also Maillard – Jera-Bezard 1994.

[565] Stein 1944, 19 pl. IVa–b (without any description of the scene); Hinüber 1989b, 83 no. 78 and 85–86 no. 82. MANP 6, 2003, nos 83:A and 84:A.

Kuberavāhana (Thalpan 116:5), occur also as pictures of adorants beside a stupa or near the scene of Buddha's Enlightenment.[566] In ritual worship donors and noble personalities, whose figures are displayed in the Buddhist art of the silk road, especially in Dunhuang, Kucha and Turfan, as well as in other sanctuaries of Buddhist China, assumed an important role.[567] In the cave paintings of Bezeklik near Turfan the donor's image is often depicted on the wall opposite the main Buddha figure in a sitting or standing position upon a pedestal. He is represented either alone or together with his wife, accompanied by a name cartridge. The pious donor also appears in the colophons, i.e. the postscripts of Buddhist texts from Turfan. Thus, the beneficent and pious donation of establishing a sanctuary and therefore contributing to the Buddhist monastic community, the *saṁgha*, was a gift to Buddha Śākyamuni himself. The ultimate aim was that of attaining Buddhahood, to gain nirvāna, the perfect knowledge and integration with the Universal. The depiction of donors also occupies a conspicuous place in the paintings of the Mogao Grottos, the "Thousand Buddha Caves" (Qianfadong), with around 7000 portraits. They occur throughout the whole Buddhist time, i.e. from the fifth to the 14th century, with their most elegant representations during its period of glory in the T'ang period (618–906).

In contrast to Kuberavāhana, the pious Siṅhoṭa appears also with another fellow adorant, Gamanaśūra (Chilas Bridge 63:B), and even together with his wife, the "lady from Caṃpā" (Caṃpadārikā) and his sister Pravāsusabhā, as donors (Chilas Bridge 64:12). If this locality would correspond with the modern Chamba District (ancient Champakā) of Himachal Pradesh, which is situated at the foot of the Himalaya, flanked in the east by Kashmir and in the north by Tibet,[568] it would indicate close relations of Siṅhoṭa's family to this remote area or even identify Siṅhoṭa as a foreigner, who originated from this region. Champakā is known as one of the ancient Buddhist principalities. Champā as it is mentioned in Kalhana's chronicle *Rājataranginī* (VII 218) had also close interrelations with Kashmir.[569] Since the 8th century it became famous for the emergence of its own art school, which developed the Champakā style.

Besides these two outstanding noble persons there are also other local devotees, such as Garuha, Lośvaradeva, Priyaśūra, Vasutara, Varuṇeśvara, Varuṇadeva, and Vuge.[570] In Chilas-

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[566] In contrast to Hinüber 2004, 169 no. XXXI the kneeling adorant with raised arms is seen as *kinnara*, supernatural being, by Bandini [-König], MANP 7, 2005, 86–87 no. 116:A, 116:5 and Jettmar-Thewalt 1985, photo 18.

[567] The donor figures in the cave paintings of Turfan are summarized by Klimkeit 1990 and those of Dunhuang by Wiercimok 1990.

[568] Hinüber 1989b, 85. For the geographical location and historical importance of Champakā (Chamba), see Minorsky 1937, 250. Thakur 2001, 9. 20–21. 138–139. [+ for the mention of Chamba in the Kuṣāṇa royal inscription of Rabatak (Śrī Campa), see Falk ed. 2015, 112, Source 096].

[569] Hinüber 1989b, 84–85 no. 80.

[570] The donor with the rare name Vuge is known from Hodar [Hodur], Gichi Nala (84:1) and Thakot (47:1).

Jayachand the image of the adorant Priyaśūra is seated on the left of a stupa (Chilas Bridge 63:A).[571] Dharmasiṃha, son of Priyananda, is himself depicted two times, both as donor with his name and with several other inscriptions at Thalpan and Ziyarat.[572] Here his donation is connected with the image of a stupa (Ziyarat 1:1) [Table 29.1–2]. There only one naming exists of a female donor, Caṃpadārikā, together with her husband Siṅhoṭa. Nonetheless, noble donatrices are even portrayed in the temple caves of Dunhuang in Eastern Turkestan.[573]

In the Buddhist site of Shing Nala, which revealed nearly 250 Buddhist carvings including 60 inscriptions in exclusive Brāhmī, are seven inscriptions mentioning one or two persons as donors. The main donor there is Ratnapriya, occurring four times in a deyadharma formula (20:1, 59:2, 62:1.5). Aside from the well-known Amṛtendrālaṃkāra, who immortalized himself in various places on both sides of the Upper Indus River from Shing Nala (31:1, 35:2), the names of Guṇamati and Puṇyaśreṣṭha, Jayacandra, Priyamitra, Ratnamitra, Sarṇera[574] and other donors with a great number of particularly elaborate images of ca. 170 stupas and five Buddhas confirm the importance of this site as monastery or place of pilgrimage during the period between 400 and 600 AD.

In Hodar, on the contrary, the number of Buddhist images in the rock carvings is much lower and in general also of inferior artistic execution than in sites such as Shatial, Thalpan with Chilas or Shing Nala. The majority of the stupa drawings is of simple design, and no images of Buddha or of his jātakas appear. In relation to the size and strategical position of the site with around 1900 rock carvings, and in comparison with the high number of inscriptions in Shatial with 1100 and in Oshibat with nearly 300 grafitti, the number of 200 Brāhmī inscriptions is rather small. As an exception in the Upper Indus region a family – father, mother and son – occurs as donors. Jīvadharma was married with Vuruṇḍi and their son Bhita seems to have written the venerations of the stupas engraved on several boulders.[575] Only two other families can be perceived by inscriptions: Siṅhoṭa appears in Chilas-Jayachand with his sister Pravāsusabhā and with his wife Caṃpadārikā, the "lady from Caṃpā".[576] The other family of indigenous origin is testified in Thalpan and comprises grandfather Priyananda, father Dharmasiṃha and his son Dharmoṭa.[577] This is the only case so far that three generations can be seen in the inscriptions.

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[571] Dani 1983a, 182 no. 124.

[572] Hinüber 1989b, 75 Nr. 69. Thalpan 262:2, 417:7. Ziyarat 1:5,7; 73:2; 89:2; 100:8.

[573] Bezeklik, temple 12: Le Coq 1924b, pl. 25. Qyzil, 7. Jh., eight groups of donors: Le Coq 1924b, 12–15. Comprehensive about Turfan: Klimkeit 1990, 190 pl. 3–6. – Dunhuang Cave 9 (Late T'ang): Wenjie 1989, II 317 no. 150 pl. 89. Cave 62 (Sui, 589–618): op. cit., I 334 no. 198 pl. 59. Dunhuang Cave 107 (871 AD Late T'ang): Wiercimok 1990, 213 pl. 20.

[574] MANP 4, 2001, 51. Shing Nala: Guṇamati and Puṇyaśreṣṭha (43:2), Jayacandra (1:1, 24:1, 36:2), Priyamitra 14:6), Ratnamitra (19:1), Sarṇera (56:1, 60:1).

[575] Hinüber, MANP 3, 1999, 89. Hodar [Hodur] 4:1.5, 6:5.9.

[576] Hinüber 1989b, 84–85 no. 80.

[577] Hinüber 1989b, 75–78 no. 69a,b,c,h,i.

6.5 *Images of Buddha*

The depiction of Buddha himself for the first time in the upper Indus region is now a central motif in rock art around Chilas and Thalpan. His particular worship at this site – if the localization can finally be attested here – found its expression in the erection of an ca. 24 m-high wooden Maitreya figure at a site called Ta-li-lo, which was visited in 401 AD by the Chinese pilgrim Faxian and his companion Bao-yun. The gilded figure is the first recorded colossal statue of Buddha.[578]

Altogether 57 isolated representations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have been recorded in the Upper Indus valley, alone 14 in Chilas. Including their additional representations in the jātakas, the stories of Gautama Buddha's life, there is a total number of 80 drawings. Some of the most exceptional images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (beings staying in the imminent process of enlightenment as Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara) seem to represent acts of veneration by Kuberavāhana – a fact not only proven by the inscription, but also by the same style of carving. This group also comprises the principal scenes from the earlier, prenatal life of Buddha, such as the jātakas of *Ṛṣipañcaka* and King *Śibi* (Śivi) in Thalpan and Shatial, the *vyāghri (Mahāsattva)* or tiger in Chilas (Thewalt 1983, 624–625 fig. 1, pl. 38).[579] The masterly engraved scenes of the *Ṛṣipañcaka* and *Śibi* legends by virtue of the corresponding style originate from the same hand of an unknown master. It has been generally noted that the main events in Buddha's life depicted on panels of stupas in Gandhara showing the birth of the future Buddha, the Enlightenment, the First Sermon and the *parinirvāṇa*, the final passing away of Šākyamuni Buddha, are the central narrative sequences in Gandharan art. They apparently reflect also the peculiar spiritual attitude of the donors.[580] It has been also observed that in the Buddhist imagery of Gandhara, jātaka scenes with ca. 20 panels are not particularly numerous.[581] Conspicuously, both the three jātakas and the three episodes of Buddha's historical life – Enlightenment, Temptation by Mara's daughters, and First Sermon – as reproduced in the Upper Indus region, are also preferred themes in the paintings of the temple caves along the Silk Road in the western part of the Hexi Corridor in East Turkestan. This coincidence indicates the way how Buddhism found its way through the mountain area

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578 For Faxian's travel story to Ta-li-lo, see: Beal 1869, 18–20 and Legge 1886, 24–25.

579 A first description of the jātakas was presented by Dani 1983a and Thewalt 1983. *Ṛṣipañcaka Jātaka*: Dani 1983a, 152 no. 115; 1983c, 95 pl. 6b; Thewalt 1983, 624–625 fig. 1, pl. 38; MANP 6, 2003, 121–122 no. 30:X. *Śibi Jātaka:* Dani 1983a, 150–154 no. 115; Nagar 1993, 81–82. MANP 6, 2003, no. 30:D. *Vyāghrī (Tigress) Jātaka:* Stein 1944, 20; Dani 1983a, 170 no. 125; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 19; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 44 no. 3; MANP 6, 2003, 43–44 no. 30:A and 30:B; this "omnipresent" jātaka is widely depicted in Buddhist art since the Kuṣāṇa period, as in Mathura in North-Central India, Gandhara, Kizil, and Dunhuang: Nagar 1993, 67–69; Bell 2000, 38–39. 53. 79–80. 99. 102. 106–107. 141–143. Quagliotti 2004.

580 Inserted here "Gail EW 42, 1992, 467–472" [= Gail 1992].

581 Kurita 1988–1990, II 275–279 no. 838–856.

to Central Asia and shows the close contacts between both regions, particularly during the reign of the Palola Ṣāhi kingdom.[582]

The depiction of the Bodhisattvas around Chilas and in Thalpan assumed greater importance than that of the Buddha. Among the Bodhisattvas in Chilas-Jayachand the images of Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya are represented three times, but in Mañjuśrī only one time. The future Buddhas Śākyamuni are shown in two and Vipaśyin in one figure, but the seated Buddha occurs only in one picture.[583] The proportion of Buddha – bodhisattva images at Thalpan, on the contrary, appears to be more balanced.[584]

Peculiar to Buddhist imagery of the bodhisattva / Buddha in Chilas-Yayachand is the elegant execution of his picture, his symmetrical, almost heraldic frontality, and the elaborate three-pointed crown as well as his jewellery, all of which proclaim his spiritual majesty. The Buddhas wear the conventional monastic garb, consisting of a rather heavy robe that covers both shoulders and falls nearly to the ankles. The robe is popular for the Buddha images of western Asia as known from Gandhara and Swat. It is still disputed whether this characteristic vestment originated from India or was adopted from classical models of the Hellenistic-Roman realm. The halo behind the head, called *prabhāmaṇḍala*, the circle aura of light, indicates the transcendence in Indic art. It never appears in images of normal mortals.[585]

The artists apparently transposed the model of the Buddha imagery with its three-dimensional depth into the noble expression of Gupta art,[586] as rendered by the so-called Kashmir bronzes in monumental form on rock faces. During the reign of the Gupta Dynasty, which ruled North India between 320 and 600 AD, the sciences, poetry, philosophy and art attained their golden age: a new aesthetic expression, a harmonious synthesis of the classical style of Gandhara with the Indic love of the human form. The impact of Kashmiri style, which since the late 8th century reached a remarkable development in their sculptural treatment, is reflected in the Buddha imagery at Chilas and Thalpan. Their symbolic effect on pious pilgrims was heightened by the colourful painting of the figures. Another important feature of the Buddha image is its particular hand-posture, the *mudrā*. Among the various mudrās are the *abhaya mudrā*, the gesture with the right hand assuring safety and protection. The hand posture *varada mudrā*, symbolizing the gift-bestowing gesture, the *dharmacakra mudrā* [see Table 26.1] – that of rolling the wheel, or the *dharma* and *bhūmisparśa mudrā*, the touching the ground gesture, which is visually met with the seated figures of the Buddha. It finds its literary counterpart in texts dealing with Buddha's victory over Māra *(māra vijaya)* just before his Enlightenment.

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[582] [See among recent works Autiero 2021].

[583] MANP 6, 2003 (Thalpan I): Avalokiteśvara (Chilas Bridge 63:4, 13; 84:2), Maitreya (8:1; 63:6; 64:19), Mañjuśrī (6:2), Śākyamuni (64:14, 20), Vipaśyin (64:16), and seated Buddha (65:1).

[584] MANP 6, 2003: Avalokiteśvara (Thalpan I: 30:30, Thalpan II: 194:152), Maitreya (30:18), Mañjuśrī (30:32), Śākyamuni (Thalpan I: 30:22, Thalpan II: 116:4; 194:58, 65, 103, 151; 195:429), undefined bodhisattva (Thalpan I: 30:31). A group of 9 seated Buddhas on the altar rock is arranged in a four-sided figure (Thalpan I: 30:140–148; Thalpan II: 194:Q; 195:K).

[585] The term *prabhāmaṇḍala* describes an aura radiating only the head or the whole figure. The other terms *śiraścakra* or *śiraśprabhācakra* appear to describe the halo behind the head, see: Huntington 1985, 114.

[586] For metal images, see: Sharma – Sharma 2000, 89. For Kashmiri Buddha bronzes of the 8th – early 9th century, see: Malla 1990, 70–71 fig. 30 and 36.

The standardized depiction of Buddha in Chilas and Thalpan and other sites apparently mirror anthropomorphic sculptures of the Lord that were part of an actual architectural complex beside the stupa. The similarities between the seated Buddha in the famous scene of his first sermon in the deer park at Benares (Thalpan 195:65) [Table 19.2] and Gandharan Buddha sculptures are obvious. Marike van Aerde again emphasized the similarities "in posture, positioning of hands, facial features with the rendering of the eyebrows, *ūrṇā* dot, earlobes and topknot, the long robe with many folds, and halo".[587]

6.6 The jātakas, legends of Buddha's former lives[588]

The figural depiction of episodes from Buddha's former lives and earlier forms of existence acted as the mediator of Buddha's message to the vast majority of illiterate people. The collection of 547 jātakas, "birth tales" (*jāta* in Sanskrit means born), narrate the many previous lives of Buddha Śākyamuni prior to his final life. As the fully enlightened Buddha he was capable of remembering these lives, which he now could reveal to his disciples. The aim of his revelation was to emphasize the virtue of his behaviour and actions during these lives. With these exemplary ideas he mediated distinct rules of conducts to his followers. The legends with their distinct moral message are a popular theme of early Buddhist art and are portrayed since the late 2nd century BC on the outer walls of buildings, railing pillars, and cross bars of stupas. The earliest depictions, which followed oral traditions, are known from the railings of stupa Sanchi II in North-Central India, which was erected during the Sunga Period before 100 BC,[589] for example, on the stupas of Amaravati, Bharhut and Sanchi I. This tradition apparently spread from Gandhara into the upper Indus region and farther to Buddhist Central Asia, but diminished in India with the Gupta period (350–650 AD) and was again revived in Central and East Asia.[590] In Turfan in the cave paintings of Kizil near Kucha the motif of different jātakas occur in more than 80 images in which the self-sacrifice dominates.[591] The jātaka murals there were influenced by prototypes in the sculpture and painting of Central

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[587] Van Aerde 2018, fig. 20.7 [+ caption].

[588] + On jātakas in Gandhara, see Neelis 2019 with references.

[589] + In this case the chronology should be corrected to "after 50 B.C." based on the most recent research. (Zaghet 2022).

[590] A comprehensive study of jātaka iconography in Dunhuang with its origin in historical India is given by Bell 2000.

[591] Li 2004, 163 refers to approximately 100 jātaka varieties.

India rather than those of Gandhara.[592] The wall paintings of the cave temples of Magao near Dunhuang in the Gansu Province, the "Cave temples of the Thousand Buddhas", represent not only the largest complex of temples cut into the living rock and used for Buddhist worship in China, but also the most important treasure of Buddhist art there from a period covering thousand years. Other cave temples are those from Yungang near Datong in Shanxi Province and Longmen near Luoyang in Henan Province. The Magao wall paintings, which depict above all figures of Buddha and bodhisattva, include also episodes of Buddha's life and jātakas with an expressive narrative component.

The *Ṛṣipañcaka Jātaka*

In the jātaka of *Ṛṣipañcaka* the ascetic debates with four noble animals the cause of suffering (the possession of the body is the ultimate cause). In this legend four monks once got into a discussion about which was the worst of the evils in the world. Since they were not able to decide in favour of one fact, they approached Buddha. The Master answered their interrogation by telling them an episode of their previous birth. The matter was then referred to an ascetic, who declared: None of you has approached the main source of evils. The evil is to have a body. Buddha at the end of his speech pointed out that he himself was the ascetic and the four monks accordingly were the four animals.

For the question "what is the greatest misery" exist various Sanskrit versions.[593] The Bodhisattva, the Buddha-to-be, had four friends, a crow, a pigeon, a snake and a deer. One time a discussion arose among them as to what they "consider to surpassingly sorrowful?" For the crow there is no misery worse than hunger, and for the pigeon there exists no evil in the world like passion. For the snake it "is not passion, which causes delusion of the mind", but anger, which "causes many a disaster and is full of evil. Thus, the enemy of anger remains at the forefront of all miseries". In contrast to the others, the deer "do not know of a misery greater than the fear of death", "which is hard to overcome – the worst of all miseries".

The legend was long popular in India and other regions, as similar versions are preserved in the Tibetan Haribhaṭṭa-jātakamālā and in the Chinese Buddhist Canon.[594] It is therefore not an unusual practise to depict a more local version of the legend of the "ascetic and animals" in the remote Upper Indus valley on the so-called altar-rock at Thalpan (scene 30:X, 30:192–199).[595]

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[592] + Not always. See Filigenzi 2006a, Santoro 2006, Olivieri 2022a for the case of Miran V.

[593] Summarized by Handurukande 1980.

[594] Handurukande 1980, 120 with references.

[595] A first description again by Dani 1983a, 152 no. 115; 1983c, 95 pl. 6b. Thewalt 1983, 624–625 fig. 1, pl. 38. Jettmar 1989d, fig. 4. Fussman 1993, 21–22 pl. 10. For a more accurate description, diverging in detail from that of Dani, see Bandini [-König], in: MANP 6, 2003, 121, 147–149.

Under a tree is an emaciated bearded ascetic, seated with his crossed legs on a rock. He is dressed only in undergarments, which is recognizable by the netlike fall of folds. Around his neck he wears a necklace *(mālā)*, which hangs down to the lap. His left hand rests on the knee of his right leg, holding a beaded rosary. His right hand is raised in the gesture of teaching (not of feeding as Dani assumed) towards the animals in the left part of the scene. In front of the ascetic are five animals, sitting next to one another in a straight line with their heads eagerly orientated towards the ascetic: at the bottom is a female goat (caprinus), above two birds – perhaps a pigeon and a raven –, a snake, and a young wild boar on the top.[596] Contrary to the four animals as mentioned in the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the story of Buddha's welfare to the animal's world, depicted in the Thalpan scene are five in number. The otherwise unusual image of the boar may refer to a wooded high mountain region,[597] as indicated by the depicted tree. It can also illustrate the hermit's solitude in the mountains. But, this peculiarity could also reflect a local version of the legend. The naturalistic execution of the tree corresponds to that of the tree image in the *Vyāghri Jātaka* scene of Chilas I (30:6). The jātaka scene is engraved on the same rock face behind the central altar-rock together with elaborate drawings, which were donated by Kuberavāhana and therefore can be dated between 600 to 630 AD.[598]

The far-reaching distribution of the jātaka of the *Ṛṣipañcaka* is testified by the repeated depiction of the theme in the upper medallion on a railing pillar of the 1st century BC from Yamuna at Mathura and in a temple cave of Kizil.[599] As in Thalpan, the animals in the corresponding scene in Mathura are also arranged on top of each other.

The *Vyāghri (Mahāsattva) Jātaka*

The *Vyāghri (Mahāsattva) Jātaka*, (the 'tiger', or more appropriately, the '*Tigress Jātaka*') is represented in Chilas-Jayachand (30:B, 30:6–20,29). Here, prince *Mahāsatva* with his two brothers Māhadeva and Mahāpraṇāda are on a hunting party in a hilly landscape, where they observe the sacrifice scene; a tree nymph watches the scene compassionately.[600] The

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[596] The depicted animals are separately identified by [Bandini-] König 1994, 87 fig. 5 (jātaka scene), fig. 39 (goat), 131–132 (birds), 135, 142 (snake), 119 fig. 61.

[597] Thewalt 1983, 625.

[598] Fussman 1993, 21–22, 23 pl. 10.

[599] Mathura: Foucher 1917 [+ Also here the quote has been integrated: the original reads "Foucher…".]. Joshi 1966, 50 fig. 13. Kizil: Le Coq – Waldschmidt 1928, 48.

[600] The *Tigress Jātaka* scene was discovered and identified by Stein during his last heroic exploration travel in August 1942, when he noticed the rock art assemblages at Thor and Chilas: Stein 1944, 20; Klimburg 1982, 30; Dani 1983a, 130, 176 no. 126. Thewalt 1983, 629, fig. 5; Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 19; Jettmar 1985; Hinüber 1985, 1989a, 1989b; Fussman 1994a, 13–18 fig. 8. For a final detailed description of the scene, see Bandini [-König], in: MANP 6, 2003, 43–49.

Bodhisattva, who is lying on the ground, sacrifices his life for the tiger cubs by feeding the starving tigress with his body. He is clearly portrayed with the *uṣṇīṣa* "as anticipations of the state of Buddhahood, which might be attained, in part through the depicted acts of sacrifice". Below Bodhisattva's image a Brāhmī-inscription (30:20) identifies the scene as a *Vyāghri Jātaka*, and other inscriptions even name the three princes involved in the scene, as they occur in the Suvarṇaprabhāsasūtra (30:8,9,29).[601]

Engraved on the same rock face to the left of the *Vyāghri Jātaka* is a veneration scene, which in view of the corresponding patina and style must originate from the same artisan's hand (Chilas 30:A). Kneeling on both sides of an elaborately designed stupa are two venerating adorants. The person on the left is dressed in a monk's friar habit, which leaves one shoulder free; the other adorant can be identified as Kuberavāhana by his name in the Brāhmī-inscription above his image (30:28).[602] The opposite monk Mitragupta has intimate relations to one of the two prominent donators through his designation as his "salvific companion and spiritual adviser" (30:4).[603]

In the murals of the caves at Kizil near Kucha, found by the Prussian Turfan Expedition, the jātaka is omnipresent.[604] The wall paintings date to the 4th century AD. A wall painting in temple 7 of the Sangim ravine near Qočo (Kocho) depicts a variant of the *Tigress Jātaka* depicting a stupa with adorants to the left, which was erected in memory of his self-sacrifice. It shows the Bodhisattva offering his body to three starving tigers. The self-sacrifice is watched by the startled prince's loyal groom Chaṇḍaka with Kaṇṭhaka, his stallion tied up to a tree.[605] In the Mogao cave temples of Dunhuang this tale is of particular spiritual importance as seen in several panels from the caves 254, 301, 302, 419 and 428. The apparent popularity of their reproduction at this sacred place persists over a long time range from the Northern Wei (439–534) to the Sui dynasties (589–618).[606] In Mogao 254 the legend is depicted in seven or eight scenes (Bell 2000, 114).

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[601] Hinüber 1989b, 79–81 no. 74a–c. [+ See Matsumura 2010, 2012].

[602] Hinüber 1989b, 81 no. 74d.

[603] Hinüber 1989b, 81 no. 75a.

[604] Cave 8, 17, 34, 38, 47, 114 and 184: see Bell 2000 with literature. Le Coq – Waldschmidt 1928, 24–25 fig. 57–62, pl. C, 18. For another legend differing from the common *Vyāghri Jātaka*, where the beast of prey eats from Bodhisattva's feet, see op.cit. 45 fig. 117–119.

[605] Le Coq 1913, 12 with fig.

[606] Cave 254: Wenjie 1989, I 23, 265 no. 16–19 pl. 236–239. Whitfield 1996, 279 pl. 16 (Northern Wei, 439–534). In cave 428 of the Northern Zou period the panel shows the Bodhisattva in the shape of the prince offering his body to the starving tiger mother and its cubs: Wenije 1989, I 52, 302 no. 117–118 pl. 135–136. Whitfield 1996, 289 pl. 54; Cave 301: Wenjie 1989, I 316 no. 153–154 pl. 101–10 (Northern Zou, 557–581). Cave 302: Wenjie 1989, I 319 no. 160–162 pl. 93–95; Cave 419: Wenjie 1989: I 329–330 no. 185–189 pl. 67–71 (Sui, 589–618). From the Five Dynasties period (907–960) there is a panel from cave 72 illustrating the *Mahāsattva Jātaka*: Wenjie 1989, II 332 no. 174 pl. 67. For depictions of the version where Buddha ransomed the dove with a piece of his own flesh, see at Kizil in Turfan: Le Coq – Waldschmidt 1928, 44–45 fig. 113 and 115. – Cave

The tiger legend belongs to one of the most popular and widespread jātakas in Central and East Asia. Faxian refers to the event which took place near Takṣaśila (Taxila), from where "still going to the eastward two days' journey, you come to the place where he gave his body to feed a starving tigress".[607] At this site of Bodhisattva's self-sacrifice "two great towers", apparently stupas, were raised, which became a place of adoration of Buddha. The pilgrim Song Yun, who never saw Takṣaśila, transferred the scene of Thatāgata's self-sacrifice to a high mountain southeast of the capital of Udyāna, where he and his companion Huisheng erected a stupa.[608] On this sacred mountain stands the "monastery of collected bones". The location of Xuanzang's *Vyāghri Jātaka* is still less clear. He went to the northern boundary of Takṣaśila via a stupa, then crossed the Sindhu and after 200 li in southeast direction reached a great stone gate, where the Thatāgata sacrificed himself to feed the starved tigress.[609]

The *Śibi (Śivi) Jātaka [Tables 22.1–23.2]*

The tale of the beneficent king *Śibi (Śivi)* as an ideal prototype of devotion and self-sacrifice is handed down by numerous Sanskrit literary accounts. The earliest version of the legend came down to us by the epic Mahābhārata, which records the heroic deeds of the five Pāṇḍava brothers and their mutual wife Draupadī.[610] In Kṣemendras *Avadānakalpalatā* the two versions are rendered as *Śibi-pigeon Jātaka* (no. 7) and *Śibi-eyes Jātaka* (no. 8). The first legend became a favourite theme in the art of Gandhara and Kuṣāṇa Mathura. In contrast to the "Sacrifice of the Eyes", the legend of the "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove", which resorted to Śibi, occurs more frequent in Buddhist art from India across Central Asia to China and Southeast Asia. The place where Buddha "ransomed the dove with a piece of his own flesh" was located by pilgrim Faxian in 'Soo-ho-to' in Uḍḍiyāna, which he visited in 403 AD. Going to the east, after five days he reached another large stupa in the country of Gandhara where Buddha, being a Bodhisattva, "gave his eyes also for another man here".[611] The kingdom of Suheduo (Soo-ho-to), the Greek Soastene, has been identified with the southern region of Swat (Sanskrit Suvāstu), which lies between Uḍḍiyāna in the north and Gandhara in the south. Swat is a region which,

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paintings at Kizil show the jātaka of the king's eye-sacrifice to a blind Brahman: Grünwedel 1912, 68 fig. 131. Le Coq – Waldschmidt 1928, 15–16 fig. 20–22, pl. B, 2; 44–45 fig. 113 and 115.

[607] Beal 1869, 32–33. Legge 1886, 32. About the versions of the *Vyāhri Jātaka*, see: Deeg 2005, 230–231 no. 10.

[608] Beal 1869, 193. For a new translation of the passage, see: Deeg 2005, 231 footnote 1153.

[609] Kuwayama 2006a, 71–72 pointed to the inconsistent geographical situation of his travel.

[610] The two versions of the legend of *Śibi*, who sacrifices his body to ransom the life of a dove and his eyes to a blind man, are collected by Meisig 1995 and discussed by Deeg 2005, 226–229 no. 7 and 8.

[611] Beal 1869, 29–31. Legge 1886, 30–32.

because of the *avadānas*, jātakas, and other legends about the life of the historical Buddha located there, has been designated as *regio sacra*.[612]

The *Śibi Jātaka*, the legend of the sacrifice to ransom a dove is engraved on the rock face of a cliff in the west of the so-called 'Altar Rock' of Thalpan (30:D), between two stupas.[613] The central scene of the story, in which the compassionate nature of the future Buddha Śākyamuni is tested, is shown with the king cutting his left upper arm with a knife. The wound is indicated. A second person holds in his right hand a balance with a heap of flesh and the pigeon in the pair of scales.

Aside from the scene on the Altar Rock of Thalpan, the only other reproduction of the *Śibi Jātaka* is known from the huge rock with the engraved great *triptychon* of Shatial [Table 22.1].[614] The interpretation of the scene on the left of the unique pagoda-like stupa as a body-offering is confirmed by the depiction of the scales and the dove, which is held by Śibi in his lap taking refuge with him. Monica Zin pointed out the unusual way of depicting King Śibi as Buddha (Tathāgata), who is clearly defined by his hair dressed as uṣṇīṣa and long earlobes.[615] He is dressed in a monk's habit with four rays emanating each from his shoulders. The *aśvattha*, Bodhi Tree, behind him completes the image of the future Buddha Śākyamuni. As in some Gandhara sculptures, the Buddha is portrayed with flaming shoulders. The flaming shoulder motif is a distinguishing feature, which according to Fussman appears in some Buddha-bodhisattva figures in the Gandhara style since the middle of 4th century AD and on sculptures mainly produced in monastery sites in Afghanistan.[616] In the Buddhist cult centre at Kara-Tepe in Old Termez, South Uzbekistan, a fine mural depicts the meditating sitting Buddha surrounded by two rows of stylized tongues of flames.[617] The motif is also found on gold coins with representations of the third ruler of the Kuṣāṇa Dynasty, Vima Kadphises (ca. 116–126 AD).[618]

In contrast to the jātakas at Chilas-Thalpan the Shatial composition (Shatial 34:A) reveals incontestable stylistic elements known from the art of Gandhara. The monumental *triptychon*, the most spectacular image of Buddhist rock art in the Northern Areas, is reproduced in masterly manner resembling a painting, which distinguishes it from the more stereotyped

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[612] Tucci 1958, 281.

[613] A first description is owed to Dani 1983a, 130, 150–154 no. 113, 115; 1995, 67. Thewalt 1983, 625, fig. 2, pl. 39. Fussman 1993, 21–22 pl. 9; 1994a, 13–18 fig. 3, 7.

[614] Discovered by Jettmar in 1979: Dani 1983a, 70, 73 no. 54; 1988, 98 pl. 23; 1995, 30 with photos; Thewalt 1983, 627–629 fig. 3; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 23 pl. 19; Fussman 1994a, 2–7, 44–46 fig. 1–6. Dar 2006, 182 pl. 81. For a more accurate description and interpretation of the jātaka in Shatial, see Bandini [-König], in: MANP 2, 1997, 178–179 no. 34: 125, 131, 171.

[615] Zin 2003, 115 drawing 16. fig. 9.

[616] Rosenfield 1967, 200; Yaldiz et al. 2000, 32–33 no. 48; Jongeward 2003, 23–24. Fire-gilt bronze meditating Buddha Śākyamuni in Arthur Sackler Museum, Cambridge: Baumer 2014, 50 fig. 30. See also Fussman 1994a, 43–44 fig. 3 and [Bandini-] König in: MANP 2, 1997, 147 fig. 17–18.

[617] Stavisky 1988, 1399–1400 pl. V.

[618] Baumer 2014, 49 fig. 29.

Buddhist imagery along the Upper Indus. The masterpiece indicates that even in more remote regions the representation of this popular jātaka was known to the artists there.[619] It is also the most reproduced jātaka in Buddhist art. Dieter Schlingloff enumerated alone thirteen images in India, eight from Amarāvatī or Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, three from Ajaṇṭā, one at Mathura and one in Gandhara.[620] Early illustrations of the *Śibi Jātaka* are included in the richly sculptured panels of the Great Stupa at Amarāvatī, which dates from the Sātavāhana period (2nd – 3rd century AD).[621] The legend is again depicted in several versions in the cave murals of Eastern Turkestan, in Kizil in Turfan in caves 13, 17, 38 and 114.[622]

In the Mogao Grotto shrines at Dunhuang are two scenes in a mural in cave 275, one of the oldest sanctuaries in this great Buddhist centre, which dates to the Northern Liang period (421–439). One scene shows the prominent self-sacrifice episode of Buddha's earlier incarnations.[623] Depicted below the sacred painting is a procession of at least 34 donors. Another version with King Śibi in the centre of the composition is found in cave 254, dating to the Northern Wei period (386–534). In the painting of King Śibi, the Gandhara model of representation was repeated. There, the Bodhisattva in a jātaka is placed in the centre of the scene. He is endowed with a nimbus and always portrayed larger than the figures surrounding him.[624] Monica Zin showed that this typical feature does not occur in jātaka scenes on Gandharan reliefs, but referred to a singular painting from Gandhara showing the characteristic "bodhisattva-centric" composition.[625]

King Śibi was one of the previous births of Lord Buddha, the Bodhisattva on his way to Enlightenment. He ruled in the city of Aritthapura, where he observed the Ten Royal Virtues. The benevolent ruler built six halls, one at each of the town-gates and one at his own palace in his city, from where he distributed alms to the paupers every day. However, he was not content with giving away material possessions and therefore wanted to achieve something more meaningful. Pursued by a hawk, a frightened pigeon came to the king, who took it under his protection and saved it from the predator. However, the hawk also appealed to him for justice. He said he needed fresh meat for his nourishment and the pigeon was its legitimate prey. Thus, the just and kind king found himself in a dilemma. The only solution for him, which was also acceptable to the hawk, was that the king cut off some of his own flesh, equal in weight to the pigeon, and give it to the hawk. As seen in the famous painting at cave 1 of Ajanta, which is dated to the first half of the 6th century, the hawk and the pigeon were, in fact, the disguised lords Indra and Agni, respectively. As Agni in the form of the pigeon was placed on the scales, he made himself heavier and heavier, causing the king to cut off larger parts of his own flesh. Finally, King Śibi had to climb with this entire body onto the scales. When the Gods saw that the king was willing to make the supreme sacrifice, they revealed themselves in their true forms. King Śibi's wounds were healed and praise was showered upon him in recognition of his virtues.[626]

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[619] Zwalf 1996, 54 no. 136.

[620] Schlingloff 1988, 88–90. See also Fussman 1994a, 14.

[621] Knox 1992, 115 no. 56; 130 no. 68; 148 no. 76; 149 no. 77.

[622] Grünwedel 1912, 68. Bell 2000, 54–55 pl. 3.2.24 with literature. Zin 2018, 115 fig. 13.

[623] Cave 275: Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics (ed.) 1982, 11, 223 no. 3. Wenjie 1989, 23, I 261 no. 8 pl. 247. Wiercimok 1990, 207 pl. 4. Whitfield 1996, 275 pl. 11, 185–186. Whitfield – Whitfield – Agnew 2000, 55 with fig. Cave 254: Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics (ed.) 1982, 225 no. 16. Wenjie 1989, I 23, 264 no. 14–15 pl. 240–241. Whitfield 1996, 279 pl. 17.

[624] Dunhuang, cave 254: Zin 2018, 115 fig. 14.

[625] Kyoto, Ryukoku Museum: Wall painting from Hadda? in Gandhara: Kurita 2003 II, fig. 327 and Zin 2018, 115 fig. 11.

In the illustration of the *Śibi Jātaka* at Thalpan, the Bodhisattva shown as King Śibi offered his own flesh, equivalent to the pigeon's weight. His flesh was heaped upon a scale. This episode is related by Faxian to have been commemorated in the kingdom of Suheduo with the erection of a stupa decorated with gold and silver.[627] *Suheduo* (Greek Soasténe, Sóastos and Sanskrit Suva(ā)stu) is situated in the south of Uḍḍiyāna and in general has been equated with Swat. The same legend of the king, there called Śivika or Sibika Raja, is reported by Xuanzang, but he places the event in the valley of Buner at the northwestern foot of the Mahaban Mountain, also a part of Uḍḍiyāna.[628] Also the Korean monk Hye Ch'o (Huei Ch'ao) in his memoirs of his pilgrimage during the 8th century refers to a not clearly described location of a monastery between Puṣkalāvatī (Charsada) and Uḍḍiyāna (Swat) where the *Śibi Jātaka* took place.[629]

Apart from these prominent protectors of Buddhism there are two further outstanding worshippers. Small-scale stupas of delicate miniature-like execution with deep incised inscriptions are donations on behalf of the two other worshippers named Vicitradeva and Varuṇeśvara.[630] Further research may provide more information about the precise dating of these carvings, and perhaps also about the social background of the sponsors. The name of another worshipper, testified by his inscriptions at different sites between Thor and Shing Nala at a distance of nearly 60 km, furnishes proof for the existence of other sacral places in this region.[631]

6.7 Episodes of Buddha's life

Narrative illustrations of the earliest lives of Buddha became an important theme in Indian and Gandharan art during the period of the Kuṣāṇa. The primary four events are his miraculous birth, his Enlightenment and Temptation, his First Sermon, and his Death and were seen as a didactic tool (and model of behaviour). These scenes, including the other secondary group of the eight great bibliographical incidents in Buddha's life: his descent from heaven, his multiplication of himself, his taming of the elephant, and being offered a bowl of honey by monkeys, are prevalent in the art of India and even in Central Asia. Of the most important incidents only three carved scenes are known from the Upper Indus region: Enlightenment and Temptation, and First Sermon;[632] they are engraved on prominent rocks at Thalpan. The presence of these scenes together with other narrative illustrations at Chilas and Thalpan shows the importance of the latter site as a centre of Buddhism.

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[626] Ajanta: Behl 2005, 73–75. Proietti 2009, 31–32, fig. on p. 39.

[627] Deeg 2005, 121. 521. Stein 1921, even identified one of the monumental stupas at Girārai in Buner with this episode. Kuwayama 2006a.

[628] Beal 1884, I 125; Cunningham 1924, 94.

[629] Fuchs 1939, 23. Yang – Jan – Iida – Preston 1984, 49.

[630] Hinüber 1989b, 87 no. 50–52, the delicate carvings of noble horses at Thalpan are assigned by him to the same artist. MANP 6, 2003, no. 30:177.184.244. 57:2.

[631] MANP 4, 2001, 109, 114.

At Chilas-Jayachand, on a rock between the ancient route and the Indus Valley – just above the KKH –, a group of fine carvings displays representations of two Bodhisattvas (63:B), the protectors of humanity plagued by suffering and the teachers of the "Four Noble Truths". Similar to bodhisattva bronzes from Kashmir, the Avalokiteśvara / Padmapani stands upon a lotus and the whole figure is surrounded by the characteristic aureole of flames mediating majesty.[633] On the left of the panel is the most important of them, Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of mercy and wisdom, who is called upon by humans in distress. The bodhisattva is a being on the way to enlightenment, who has renounced the attainment of nirvāṇa, the integration with the Universal as the sole aim of Buddhism. Maitreya with the three-pointed crown is also the future Buddha and protector of the new doctrine. Near the saintly being a stupa and a "vase of plenty" *(pūrṇaghaṭa)* are depicted. The inscriptions in Brāhmī are dedications by the pious worshippers Siṇhoṭa (and his wife?) Gamanaśūra or Śamanaśūra.[634]

One of the most conspicuous panels showing two Buddhas and Bodhisattvas flanking a stupa in the centre is located on the KKH just above the Thalpan bridge.[635]

The three popular episodes of Buddha's life: the Temptation, Enlightenment or *nirvāṇa*, and at least the First Sermon, belong to the most spectacular engraved Buddhist scenes around the sacred site of Thalpan.

The Temptation of Māra

One of the most delicate panels at Thalpan renders the temptation during the time of the future Buddha Śākyamuni's Enlightenment or *nirvāṇa* by the handsome daughters Tanhā (desire), Rāga (lust) and Aratī (aversion), sent by the demon king Māra to prevent him on his strenuous way to Supreme Knowledge. This scene also seems to be a creation by the same workshop or artist, who illustrated the *Ṛṣipañcaka* and *vyāghri* jātakas.[636] This enables us to date this significant group of carvings to within at least one generation during the 6th century. The mediating Śākyamuni with his hair tied up in a bun, the attribute *uṣṇīṣa* (which means turban),[637] a knot of hair indicating princely heritage, is seated upon a throne in the unusual shape of a rectangle with his left hand in the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*, the "earth-touching gesture". This peculiar hand-posture, out of five different (positions) variations mudrās, shows the right hand extended with the palm inside and touching the seat on which Buddha meditates (or reaching toward the earth), the left hand placed in his lap, signifies the Great Enlightenment. In this image only two of Māra's daughters in a seductive dancing pose, dressed in an apron of leaves, flank the seated Śākyamuni, one of the mortal Buddhas, who remains calm and serene. In spite of exhibiting 32 types of allurements *(strī māyā)*, as described in *Lalitavistara*, and all continuous efforts to attract Siddhārtha, they could not seduce him and the devil king Māra had to accept his final defeat. Before the temptation by his daughters, celestial nymphs, he sent his army to attack the prince, but Siddhārtha remained firm in his determination and efforts and declared: "O Māra, Touching this very base of the universe (with my right hand), unbiased and always equal, I swear that I shall never be false. Let the Great Earth stand as a witness for me".[638]

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[632] About these stages in Buddha's life, see: Foucher 2003 [1949], 105–152.

[633] Uhlig 1979, 122 fig. 56; 1995, 88. fig. 43.

[634] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 20 pl. 16. Dani 1995, 40–43 (figure p. 41 depicts Avalokiteśvara). MANP 4, 2001, 75–77. For a description of the site and the inscriptions: Hinüber 1989b, 85–87 no. 83–85 pl. 158.

[635] MANP 6, 2003, 79–84, no. 64:13–19.

This episode is an important feature in Gandharan and Mathura relief art and occurs in one of a spectacular series of ivory works depicting Śākyamuni's life, probably produced in a Kashmiri workshop of the 8th century.[639] It occurs also in Central Asia, where at Kizil near Kucha located on the northern route of the Silk Road, in the painted sequence of pictorial biographical narratives, the temptation scene is depicted in the Peacock Cave (395–465).[640] In cave 455 of the Northern Wei period (439–534) at Dunhuang, Māra's daughters are shown in a dramatic composition, both as young temptresses and their transformation into ugly old women after their unsuccessful temptation of Buddha.[641] The scene is completed by his First Sermon, which repeats the iconographic program of a painting in cave 254, where the Enlightenment, demon king Māra's attack and the First Sermon are illustrated.

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[636] Māra's daughters: Dani 1983a, 142 no. 106; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 20; MANP 7, 2005, 169 scene 195:W, 211 no. 428–430.

[637] + Also "top", "cover": for example, the coping top of the railings *(vedikā)* is called *uṣṇīṣa* (see Olivieri 2022a, Hinüber 2016).

[638] After Joshi 1966, 59.

[639] Gandhara: Ingholt 1957, 64–65 figs 61–62. Yaldiz 1992, 73 fig. 25. Ghani-ur-Rahman 2007. Relief of 2nd – 3rd cent. in Peshawar Museum no. 02764: Ali – Zahir 2005, fig. 52. – Kashmir: Pal 1984, 102 no. 44. Mathura: Joshi 1966, 59–60 fig. 86.

[640] "Cave of Stairs": Le Coq 1924a, 35 pl. 6 and 7, 35. "Peacock Cave": Karetzky Eichenbaum 2000, 53–54 fig. 8.

[641] Whitfield 1996, 281. Cave 254: Wenjie 1989, I 53, 267 no. 21 pl. 234.

The Enlightenment [Table 20.2]

The other famous episode in Thalpan shows the enlightened Buddha with his hands in his lap, palms facing upward, the right upon the left, in *dhyāni mudrā*, the gesture of meditation, sitting under the Tree of Enlightenment and a stupa on top. He is seated upon a lotus flower, which rises high on a lotus stalk. The inscription in Brāhmī mentions the patron Kuberavāhana, who has donated this dedication, represented by the adorant and the stupa. Kneeling to the right in the scene is apparently Kuberavāhana himself, holding a food vessel in his left hand and a flower in his right hand. The figure praising this act is not a supernatural being, a *kinnara.* Previously the small figure has also been interpreted as "heavenly being flying down from right with a bowl in his left", an *apsarā* (a female divinity inhabiting the sky) or *kinnara* (a creature that is part bird, part human, or part horse, part human).[642]

As additions to such scenes their donors or benefactors, both male and female, are depicted in pious attitudes, and even by name, as it is also tradition in many of the wall-paintings in chapels and shrines along the Silk Road and – last but not least – in art works of the Christian Renaissance. Such donations were considered to be an act of merit, which might enable the donor to escape further rebirth into this world. The site of Enlightenment is Bodh Gayā, ca. 150 miles distant from the place where the Buddha preached the First Sermon near Benares.[643] The composition is rendered in the usual standardized way. Scenes of Buddha's enlightenment show him sitting under the tree of enlightenment, the pipal *(bodhi)* tree are again a familiar theme in the Gandharan art.[644]

The First Sermon in the Deer Park of Sarnath near Benares [Table 19.2]

From the western hillock of the large double rock piles eastwards of the bridge leading from Chilas to Thalpan, one of the most elaborate representations of a seated Buddha, and indeed the most famous of the four Great Events in the life of the Buddha, is preserved in rock carvings: Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath near Benares after his Enlightenment.[645] This rock consequently was called by Dani the "Rock of the First Sermon". The founder of Buddhism, Buddha Śākyamuni – according to the usual reckoning – lived between ca. 563–483 BC. Accurate historical records about his way through life have not been handed down. Hence, many legends are woven around his life, which were composed over many centuries' time. He was a descendent of the noble Gautama clan and the Śakya tribe, and was born as prince

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[642] Dani 1983a, 146–148 no. 111; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 20 pl. 13.

[643] For a description of the site Bodh Gayā, Gayā District, Bihar, see Falk 2006, 284–286.

[644] Yaldiz 1992, 74 fig. 27.

[645] Dani 1983a, 130, 142–144 pl. 6; 1995, 65 with fig. p. 68. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 20 pl. 14. MANP 7, 2005, no. 194:K.

Siddhārtha – he who has accomplished *(siddha)* his goal *(artha)* – in the village Lumbini in the neighbourhood of Kapilavastu (Kapilavasthu), situated at the foot of the Himalayas in present-day Nepal.[646] His father Śudhodana was a Śakya ruler in the town Kapilavastu, his mother was Māyā, who died seven days after the birth of her child. For the Śakya he was the sage *(muni)* and therefore called Śākyamuni.

The historical existence of Buddha is not in doubt, but owing to the enormous impact his *dharma* gave rise to, his legendary life-history is enriched with supernatural events, whose historical background is not comprehensible.[647]

At the age of 29 he left his family to choose a vagrant life as mendicant ascetic. After acceding to Supreme Knowledge, which Gautama, now Buddha, obtained while meditating at Bodhagayā under a pipal tree (or later called Bodhi Tree, *bodhivṛkṣa*, which belongs to the tree family of *ficus religiosa*), the tree of enlightenment, and after being requested by Mahābrahmā and Śakra to impart his knowledge to others, he decided to get up from Bodhimaṇḍa at Gaya and to proceed towards Sarnath to preach there his wisdom to mankind. Sitting on the bare ground in the famous animal park *(mṛgadāya)* at Sarnath (or ancient Isipatana) near ancient Kāśi, the modern Varanasi (Benares),[648] in the audience of his five disciples, his first ascetic companions *(pañcha bhadravargīya)*, who had shared his quest and privations as well, who left him when he abandoned his austerities, he enunciated the four noble truths: sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the removal of sorrow, and the way leading to the removal of sorrow. He showed the paths to secure deliverance from this sorrow and suffering to his first followers by setting in motion the Wheel of Doctrine *(dharmacakrapravartana):* "Thus was moved the Wheel of Law with twelve spokes, secured with three jewels *(ratnatraya)* in the presence of Kauṇḍiṇya, five Bhadravargīyas, six chores of gods and so many others" (after *Lalita-vistara*). The disciples sit in meditating pose, *dhyāni mudrā* (according to Dani) or *vajraparyaṅkāsana* (Bandini). Before him, on the drawing below the preaching Buddha the symbolic 'wheel of doctrine' on a pedestal is seen flanked by a seated deer or rather by a female and a horned male goitered gazelle *(Gazella subgutturosa)* with heads turned towards the master symbolising the animal park.[649] This rock carving at Sarnath near Benares has been dated to the beginning of the 6th century or before 630.[650] The place of the First Sermon as mentioned by Faxian in ca. 400 A.D has raised doubts. Faxian saw there two large stupas and two monasteries *(saṅghārāma)* inhabited by a small community of Hīnayāna monks. When Xuanzang visited the site in 629 AD, according to its importance as one of the most celebrated places of Buddhist history, the complex had expanded considerably with establishment of a large community of 1500 monks studying Hīnayāna Buddhism, the Little Vehicle of the Sammitīya school. Xuanzang enumerated several stupas and "a stone pilllar about 70 feet high", erected by the Mauryan king Aśoka as well as a temple. Inside of this building was a copper figure of Buddha "represented as turning the wheel of the law.[651] The site with the pillar and a monastery "called the *dharma cakra saṅghārāma* (the monastery of the Wheel of Doctrine)" was described by the Korean monk Hye Ch'o in the 8th century.[652]

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[646] For a description of the site Lumbinī, Rūpandehī District in Nepal, see: Falk 2006, 177–180.

[647] + Actually, there is still a (tenuous) debate about the historicity of Siddhartha; see Hinüber 2019.

[648] For a description of the site Sarnath, Vārāṇasī District, Uta Pradesh, see: Falk 2006, 209–214.

[649] The animals are generally described as deer (Dani 1983a, 142), also rather as goitered gazelle by Bandini [-König] 1994, 86–87 fig. 4.

[650] Dani 1983a, 144. Fussman 1994b, 68. The determination of the gazelle's variety as possibly goitered gazelle has been discussed by [Bandini-] König 1994, 86–87. Cf. note 947.

The world of the 6th century BC appears generally to have been a period of awakening in the realms of philosophy and religion. Buddha was a contemporary of other great religion founders, in the east such as Mahavira, the founder of Jainism in India, Zarathustra in Persia and Confucius and Laozi in China. Defining philosophy as aspiration of the human spirit, to explain the world's essence and the humanity's own existence, the cosmology and ontology in the theogony of Hesiodos of Akra in Boeotia, who lived in ca. 700 BC, and of the founders of the philosophy of nature in Ionia, Anaximandros, Anaximenes, Herakleitos and Pythagoras as well as the Eleateans in southern Italy.[653]

The earliest artistic testimony of Buddha preaching the First Sermon is depicted at the north gate of the great stupa in Sanchi, one of the most important Buddhist centres, dated as early as the 1st century AD. This scene, but also the other two episodes Temptation and Enlightenment, are included in many different variations in the elaborate sculptural decoration of the Great Stupa at Amarāvatī, which was erected during the reign of the Sātavāhana kings (2nd – 3rd century AD).[654] This classical scene of Buddha's former life is a relatively frequent subject in pictorial art by the time of the Kuṣāṇa era in Gandhara. The scene is often repeated in many variations in Gandharan art, such as on a schist relief from the Dharmarājikā stupa at Taxila dating to the 2nd century AD[655] and elsewhere in reliefs or open work panels since the "early Indian school".[656] The majority of the representations of the First Sermon is rendered as narrative scenes in relief. Exceptional is the Gandharan sculpture of a seated Buddha, which is dated to the 3rd – 4th century. On the recessed part of the base the wheel on a pedestal is flanked by two resting deer with their heads turned to the central symbol.[657] In the Gupta sculptural tradition, the Buddha Śākyamuni preaching at Sarnath, now worshipped in a temple at the site, is represented by a well-known relief in the Indian Museum of Calcutta and dated to ca. 500 AD.[658] The gesture of preaching, known in Sanskrit as *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*, signifies the First Sermon, which was further elaborated during the early Gupta period.[659]

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[651] Faxian: Beal 1869, 134–138; Xuanzang: Beal 1884, II 45–47 [+ Beal 1911].

[652] Yang 1884, 39.

[653] + After "human spirit" HH added "genius", after "ontology", "*Seinslehre*".

[654] Knox 1992, 54 no. 8; 158 no. 83 (Temptation), 50 no. 6; 32, 119 no. 60 (1st century AD); 96 no. 37 etc. (Enlightenment), 58 no. 11, 96 no. 38; 130 no. 68 etc. (First Sermon).

[655] Gandhara, 2nd – 3rd century: Ingholt 1957, 68–70 figs 74–77. Zwalf 1985, 35 fig. 22, a later example from Ali Masjid of the 7th century, see: 101 fig. 133. Zwalf 1996, 181–183 no. 199. Taxila: Askari 2000, 26, fig. 8. Ashraf Khan – Lone 2004, 91 with fig.; Ashraf Khan – ul-Hasan – Lone 2005, no. 25–27. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington: Kurita 2003, I 317–318 pl. 280–281. The motif of the haloed preaching Buddha is also depicted on a seal from Charsadda: Mohammadzai 2014, 55 no. 3D.

[656] Marshall 1960b, 90–91 fig. 4 and 117. Karetzky Eichenbaum 1995, 133–147. Sculptural representations in Mathura art: Joshi 1966, 61–62 fig. 52. Sharma 1995, 242–243 fig. 169–170.

The First Sermon is included in the sequence of paintings from the 'Cave of Stairs' at Kizil near Kucha, showing episodes of Bodhisattva Gautama's life.[660] The animals representing the park of Sarnath are rendered by gazelles, corresponding to Indian tradition and the Thalpan scene. On the contrary, in the Buddhist art of Eastern Turkestan the animal park is represented by another game peculiar to this region, the stag. In cave 254 at Dunhuang Buddha's First Sermon occurs together with his enlightenment and the simultaneous attack of King Māra's demon army.[661] The compositions are dated to the Northern Wei period (439–534). The episode in different compositions illustrates particularly caves of the T'ang Dynasty.[662]

The composition in Thalpan displays the First Sermon with all of the details in a codified way. The rendering of the symbolic "Wheel of the Doctrine" with a female gazelle and a horned male gazelle on either side is a stereotyped motif in Tibetan art.[663] The Thalpan drawing, which is not depicted in the earlier Gandharan manner but shows all elements of its representation there, matches the more stylised rendered scene of a small open work panel from Ali Majid dated to the 7th century.[664] In its composition with the Buddha in the centre and his listeners arranged in a circle around him, the scene does not reflect the rectangular panel of Gandharan reliefs than a painting. In Kushinargha, the fourth holy place, Buddha at last achieved Nirvāṇa.

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[657] Pal 2003, 52–53 fig. 21.

[658] Pal 1978, 71 fig. 5.

[659] + Sentence partly rephrased.

[660] Le Coq 1924a [+?], 35–36 pl. 7, 37.

[661] Whitfield 1996, 278 fig. 10.

[662] Caves 57, 322, 334 (Early T'ang, 618–712): Wenjie 1989, II 246–248 no. 10–14 pl. 228–230; 264 no. 46 pl. 195. Cave 320 (High T'ang, 712–781): op. cit. II 279 no. 78 pl. 166. Clay figure from Shorchuk, Kirin Cave, 8th century. Seated Buddha with painted scene of the Sarnath sermon on the pedestal: Yaldiz et al. 2000, 228–229 no. 331.

[663] Fussman 1994b, 61–69 fig. 4–9 refers to a wall-painting of two gazelles, one without horns and one with horns, in the Māyā cave at Kizil (Grünwedel 1912, 167 fig. 384) and in Lhasa showing the classical *dharma-cakra-pravartana* of Benares with gazelles on either side.

[664] Zwalf 1985, 101 fig. 133. Van Aerde 2018, fig. 20.7 emphasized the similarities between the depiction of Buddha in the First Sermon scene at Thalpan and the Buddha sculptures of Gandharan art.

A scene recalling Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sūtra* [Table 21.1]

Another outstanding Buddhist composition has its origin in an eminent donor in the Upper Indus region, known as Amṛtendrālaṃkārasya, who left behind his name at five other sites between Shing Nala and Thor. The large drawing on a large boulder facing the Indus at Hodar shows two Buddhas sitting on a joint pedestal, side by side with a stupa between them. The Buddhas are shaded by ornamented umbrellas and the stupa shows decorative details such as bells and flags. Its dome is covered with lotus petals. The whole scene probably recalls the eleventh chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* or the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is named *Stūpaśaṃdarśana*, the "Manifestation of a Stūpa". Prabhūtaratna, a Buddha of the past, appearing in his stupa, asks Śākyamuni, one of the mortal Buddhas, to take a place beside him, thus testifying the truth of the Lotus Sūtra that Śākyamuni was preaching at that moment. The image of a stupa of the Gandharan type flanked by two Buddhas with umbrellas, sitting upon a joint pedestal is of exceptional artistic quality, resembling the best Buddhist carvings like the three jātakas at Chilas-Jayachand, Thalpan, and Shatial.[665] Therefore, one of the figures might represent Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, and the other could symbolize Prabhūtaratna, the Buddha of the past praising Śākyamuni, together with the "stūpa of the wealthy treasures", which grows from the earth. The motif of the two sitting Buddhas with the "stūpa of seven precious materials", comprising gold, silver, lapislazuli, *musāragalva*, emerald, red coral and *karketaṇa* stone,[666] is known in Buddhist art of East Asia. It is often repeated in both cave temples of the Northern Zhou (557–581) no. 428 and of the high T'ang periods (705–780) no. 45 and 303 at Dunhuang,[667] in grotto 4 of Yulin at Anxi east of Dunhuang, Lung Men and Yungang, and on relief stelae in China. As in the most elaborate Buddhist narrative scenes from Chilas-Jayachand and Thalpan the close relations to the Buddhist art of Tibet and China are obvious, whereas in the iconography of the Upper Indus region during this phase only few influences from Gandhara are apparent. According to the Brāhmī inscription in five lines, the name of the donor of this dedication is known also from Thor North, Hodar [Hodur]-Halalosh, Gichi Nala, Ziyarat and Shing Nala. In Shing Nala and Hodar [Hodur] the donor also dedicated three other stupas. Another line of the inscription refers to a "monastery of Candrasena". This is one of the few inscriptions that mention a monastery such as Bhadrarajñaṃkṣatravavihāra in Gichi Nala (15:1).

One of the most delicate images is again found in Thalpan I, showing the seated and haloed Buddha Śākyamuni with the hair (or turban) knot atop the head, the *uṣṇīṣa*, sitting upon a lotus throne, the right arm with hand open and extended along the body, showing the *varada mudrā*, which symbolizes the "bestowal of a boon or benediction gesture" or

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[665] The stupa of Gandharan type as described in the *Stūpasaṃdarsana* chapter of the Lotus Sūtra is discussed by Seishi Karashima 2018, also referring to the Hodar [Hodur] drawing in fig. 11.

[666] + Two terms are uncertain: the first may refer to coral, the second to crysoberyl.

[667] Whitfield 1996, 315 fig. 42 (cave 45), 290 fig. 17 (cave 428).

bhūmisparśa mudrā, the "earth-touching gesture".[668] The celestial guard Vajrapani standing behind the seated Buddha acts as his protector. He wears a high crown and holds two of his main symbols in the hands: In his left hand – the *vajra*, the thunderbolt, and in the right hand – the *pāśa*, a lasso.[669]

6.8 Images of the stupa (2) [Tables 24.1–35.2]

The prototypes of the stupa form and the classic image of the seated Buddha clearly are to be found in the so-called Kashmir bronzes which contrary to other centres of bronze casting were mainly produced in brass, often enriched with silver and occasionally copper inlay.[670] Their centres of production during the period of the Karkota Dynasty (ca. 600–956 AD) apparently extended over a wider territory than Kashmir that included the plain of Srinagar, Gilgit and probably Swat. Fussman suggested the existence of such a workshop at Gilgit, but until now there is no evidence of a larger Buddhist site in this basin. The most elaborate masterpieces however must be the artwork of specialized artists from Kashmir, the prolific metropolitan centre of Buddhist high culture during the 8th and 9th centuries. Kalhana's chronicle of Kashmir's kings *Rājataraṅgiṇī* from 12th century points out the kingdom as an important source of bronze production. Even precious metal statues of colossal proportions were erected by order of King Lalitāditya Muktapida (ca. 700–750 AD), who expanded Kashmir's borders and gained the riches to initiate the extant production of sculpture, paintings and sacral architecture. The high number of superlative artworks from the 8th and 9th centuries reflects the creative and prosperous power of Kashmir during the golden age of the Karkota Dynasty. Its significant impact on the development of religious thought and its expression in art was benefitted by its location as a crossroads linking northern India with Central Asia, China and Tibet.

The Kashmir bronzes, all made in the lost wax technique, could have been produced there on order by members of the Palola Ṣāhi kingdom in Gilgit, as the dedicatory inscriptions lead one to assume (the classic Buddha figure is seated upon a pedestal supported by columns). This is evidenced by the two altar pieces from the Rockefeller and Norton Simson collection known as “Buddha of Nandivikramādityanandi” which depict Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who symbolizes knowledge *(prajñā)*. His right hand rests on the head of a tiny figure of the donor, identified as King Nandivikramādityanandī by the dedicatory inscription.[671] The intimate blessing gesture to the king may indicate the close relations between donor and Mañjuśrī. In the left hand he holds the end of his robe and a manuscript, which refers to the source of *dharma*, the basis of the religion itself. Although the robe with schematically arranged folds and the jewellery of the Buddha do not show any local features, the figure is undoubtedly of Kashmiri workmanship. The date of its donation is the 26th or 27th April 714.

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[668] Dani 1983a, 140 no. 104. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 19. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1987, 61 fig. 3. Bandini described the object in the right hand of Vajrapani as cymbal: MANP 7, 2005, no. 194.

[669] For his role as a minor deity, thunderbolt-bearer, god of rain, and king of the devas, see: Getty 1928, 50–53.

[670] + This class of small votive bronzes are well known and are widely discussed in some seminal studies, among which are *Bronzes of Kashmir* by P. Pal (1975), *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* by U. von Schroeder (1981), and *Himalayan Bronzes* by Chandra L. Reedy (1997). Among the studies of regional productions, see the study of bronzes from the Bolor-Chilas area by O. von Hinüber (2004) *(Die Palola Sāhis)*. For rock sculptures of the same style and iconography, see the work on Swat by A. Filigenzi (2015) *(Art and Landscape)*. See also Olivieri – Filigenzi 2023 with refs.

The other religious dedication by the same Nandivikramādityanandī and his queen (Śrī Śāmadevī) Namovuddhāya is dated to 23rd April 715/16, which corresponds to the Vaiśākha full moon, the day of the birth, Enlightenment and *nirvāṇa* of Buddha.[672] The most evident connection is seen between an exquisitely drawn stupa from Chilas-Jayachand and the two monuments flanking the bejewelled and crowned seated Buddha on the most elaborate Kashmir sculpture in the John D. Rockefeller Collection. It was jointly dedicated by a purportedly Palola Ṣāhi high official, the treasurer Saṃkarasena and his consort the princess Devaśrī in the year 90, which corresponds to 20 April 714.[673] The Proto-Śāradā inscription does not mention the Palola Ṣāhi; however, the given date would place the dedication within the reign of the seventh known Palola Ṣāhi king Nandivikramādityanandī (ca. 710–715). Not only the general proportions of the sculpture, but also the details of its structural principle are matching, such as the lotus petals at the base, the staircase, the trefoil niche, the columns at both sides of it, the shaping of the *aṇḍa* (drum), and the pillars with stepped base and capital. The *chattrāvalī* consists of more than seven parasols connected by rows of small round discs, and the crown ends in a crescent and a sun symbol.[674] The type of the stupas appears to follow an architectural model based on the stupa of the famous king Kaṇiṣka (c. 127–153 AD) of the Kuṣāṇa Dynasty, which was erected in Puruṣapura (near Peshawar). One peculiarity is the insertion of the meditating Buddha on the dome. The cosmic Buddha wears a five-pointed crown, jewels, but a monk's robe and a cape-like robe across the shoulders, and he is seated upon a lotus. The brass sculpture is related to the Buddha dedicated by Nandivikramādityanandī and the lady of his harem Upalā only six days later than the Rockefeller bronzes on 26th or 27th April 714.[675] According to the Proto-Śāradā inscription on a Kashmir sculpture of bodhisattva in Lhasa, Devaśrī was the daughter of the sixth known Palola Ṣāhi king Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī, who reigned ca. 686–710.[676] The princess Devaśrī is a sister of the queen Samādevī and therefore a member of the royal family. The relatively high number of Maitreya images from a Kashmiri workshop indicates the predilection for this Bodhisattva and iconographic features of Gandharan art.

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[671] Malla 1990, 71 fig. 34. Fussman 1993, 39–48 pl. 30. Hinüber 2004, 38–39, 159, 174 no. 14 fig. 5. First publication: Pal 1975, 108–109 no. 31; 1977, 53 fig. 26. Kim 1997, 239–240 fig. 238 identifies the figure as Maitreya. – A bronze figure of a crowned and bejewelled Buddha seated on a lion throne of the same style as the altarpiece dedicated by Nandivikramādityanandī is published by Uhlig 1979, 118 fig. 52. [+ HH left annotated “Hinüber 2006”].

[672] (Pritzker Collection): Hinüber 2003, 37–39 fig. 5; 2004, 40–42, 159, 174–175 no. 16 fig. 7.

[673] Asia Society, New York: Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, (1979.44). Brass with inlays of copper, silver, and zinc. H. 31,1 cm. Fussman 1993, 43–48 pl. 31, Hinüber 2004, 39–40 no. 15 fig.6 and Pal 1975, 106 no. 30; 1988b, 92 fig. 3; Pal 2003, 107 fig. 63. For an excellent photo of the sculpture, see: Leidy 1994, 74–76 no. 56. The pedestal inscription according von Schröder 1981, 22 with plate, 108–109, 118 fig. 16B reveals: “This is the pious gift of the devout Saṃkarasena, the great Lord of the elephant brigade, and of the poor minded and pious princess Devaśrī, made the second day of Vaiśākha in the year 3 or 8”. He dates the sculpture between 750–850 AD. A more recent detailed attention to the sculpture is owed to Twist 2011, 66–69 fig. A.8.

[674] + Here, after “sun symbol” HH added “(= Bandini)”.

The short excavation report of Shastri from 1938 about the discovery of bronze figurines in the "hollow stupa" of Naupura in Gilgit gave rise to the suspicion that the two Kashmiri bronzes from the Rockefeller and Norton Simson ("Pritzker Buddha") collection known as "Buddha of Nandivikramādityanandi" came from Gilgit.[677] This suspicion was confirmed by Pratapaditya Pal's allusion in his first publication "Bronzes of Kashmir", that after the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1948 abdicated from his throne at Srinagar and soon after his retirement to Bombay "a group of bronzes appeared on the art market".[678]

Two large elaborately designed stupa images of Chilas-Jayachand (Chilas Bridge 30:1) and Thalpan (30:26) go back to the important donator Kuberavāhana.[679] They show two figures standing on the *aṇḍa* on both sides of the *harmikā*. The men are dressed in a long robe, with one hand on the hips, and holding a lance in the other arm stretched outwards and have been interpreted by Monique Maillard and Robert Jera-Bezard as *lokapāla*s, world guardians.[680] Their garments, weaponry and arms akimbo reminded them of warrior images on Kuṣāṇa coins.

Another type of the stupa is depicted on a huge rock in the site of Shatial (34:A), the important transit station and trading centre used by Sogdian transregional merchants. The rock exhibits the most impressive Buddhist composition of the Upper Indus which consists of three scenes: the described *Śibi (Śivi) Jātaka*, a veneration of the Buddha, and a veneration of the great stupa (34:133).[681] The most detailed appreciation of the great votive building of pagoda-shape or Central Asian type is owed to Fussman, who dates the image to ca. 350 AD.[682]

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[675] Fussman 1993, 39–43 pl. 30; Hinüber 2004, 40–42 no. 14 fig. 5. Pal 2003, 108, fig. 64, inscription translated by O. von Hinüber, see appendix, p. 285.

[676] Brass with copper and silver inlay, H. 67 cm. Jo khang/g Tsug lag khang Collection (no. 870), Lhasa: von Schroeder 2001, 176–180 pl. 52A–F. Hinüber 2003, fig. 3 and 2004, 31–36 fig. 4. Twist 2011, 58–60 fig. A.4.

[677] + See Laurent 2013.

[678] Pal 1975, 9. See also Jettmar 2002, 169–170, 186.

[679] MANP 6, 2003, 44–45 (Chilas Bridge 30:1) and 128–129 (Thalpan 30:26).

[680] Maillard – Jera-Bezard 1994, 176–179 figs 3–5. For reference to Kuṣāṇa coinage, see p. 179 fig. 11. For textual evidence of the *lokapāla*s as individual parts of the stupa, see: Hinüber 2016, 33 footnote 19. Dani 1983c, 93 pl. IVb (Thalpan 30:26) names the figures guardsmen and Thewalt 1985, 786 calls them soldiers.

Images of the stupa in Gilgit and Baltistan

Differing from the elaborate design of the stupa forms in Chilas-Thalpan, around Gilgit and in Baltistan are other forms of this sacred building that are of mediocre artistic quality. A group of mainly stupa carvings on boulders found by Jettmar near Gakuch in Punyal could have been erected at the place of a Tibetan sanctuary by the bon-pos, an organised monastic order of Tibetan religion with its layfolk.[683] The imagery of the votive building appears in two standard types with few variations.[684] The stupa of the terraced form is characterized by a simple stepped pyramid with the dome *(aṇḍa)* on its top, but without umbrellas *(chattra)*. The central post is crowned by a trident (stone 1, 2, 11). The curvature of the dome can show the characteristic inversion. The terraced form shows in two examples the configuration with the "descent from heaven" *(sopāna)* and the garlands hanging down from the spire (stone 3, 6, 12). The terraced type apparently is a model of pre-Tibetan times in this area as parallels in the Buddhist rock art of Baltistan show. The body of the stupas at rock art sites such as Shigar, Gol between Skardu and Humayun Bridge near the confluence of the Shyok and the Indus rivers, and Balghar Foqnaqh in the Shyok Valley is formed by squares with lavishly inserted decoration by flowers, svastikas and solar signs.[685] The drawings designed in a sort of 'cubistic style' were assigned by Jettmar to a later Buddhist period. But the Buddhist imagery and inscriptions mainly in Brāhmī with few exceptions of the later Proto-Śāradā, along one of the main routes do not "represent an outdated tradition preserved in a remote area". These carvings apparently belong to the Bolorian period of the 7th century prior to Tibetan occupation.

The cross-shaped votive building shows the characteristic projecting steps in the lower and upper part of the stereobate (Gakuch, stone 4 and 5). Noteworthy is the eye carved into the dome, which is a foreign element in this region and known from later *mchod-rten* of Nepal. The sun-and-crescent ornament, which originates from India and is known also from a stupa image of Gandharan type at Chilas II, crowns the stupa of stone 6. The motif is pursued further in Buddhist art of Ladakh and Nepal and from there spread to Tibet.[686] In the Buddhist imagery of Baltistan the cross-type belongs to a later period than the 'terraced-stupa', perhaps developed and introduced during the Tibetan occupation from a prototype known from Ladakh, clearly a distinctive Tibetan form.[687] Francke for the first time had designated this building as "cruciform type of stūpa", together with a donation inscription discovered by Stein on a boulder flanking the ascent to the Darkot Pass leading from Yasin in the Gilgit Basin to the Wakhan corridor.[688] A boulder along the ancient pathway across the tableland of Deosai is decorated with the same stupa image. The same design of the *mchod-rten* is shared by a carving found in Wakhan, which was donated by a member of the same clan named *rMe-'or*, mentioned in the Darkot inscription.[689] The donation of a *mchod-rten* at the Wakhan site near the location of a hill-station *(ri-zug)* can be linked with the safeguarding of the route leading from Wakhan to Bruža, the Gilgit region, which played an eminent role in the conflict between T'ang and Tibet during the first half of the 8th century.

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[681] A first description is owed to Jettmar 1980b, 174 and 1982a, 15–16. Jettmar – Thewalt 1985 and 1987, 23 pl. 19. Thewalt 1983, 627ff. – Dani 1983a, 70 no. 54; 1988, 98 fig. 23; 1995, 30–31 with figs. Fussman, 1994a. Dar 2006, 182, 221–222 pl. 81. Hauptmann 2008, 355 fig. 3. A short characterization of the place is given by Neelis 2011, 279–280 fig. 5.2. – For a comprehensive descriptions of the scene, summarizing earlier observations, see: [Bandini-] König, in: MANP 2, 1997, 178–179 no. 34:A.

[682] Fussman 1994b, 4–7 (big stupa), 9–10 (small stupa) fig. 2–6.

[683] Denwood 1980.

[684] Jettmar 1975, 297 fig. 5. Jettmar – Sagaster 1993, 123–139. Fussman 1994b, 60–61 fig. 2–3 refers to similarities between the stupa of Gakuch stone 6 to the Kuberavāhana dedication at Thalpan.

[685] Jettmar 1989b, 184–185 fig. 72; 1990, 808 fig. 7–9.

The third form belongs to the type of the gate-stupa with a similar construction as the cruciform-type, but with a rectangular opening in the basis, thus indicating a passage. Such gateway-stupas are widespread in Ladakh.[690] In Leh stupas erected over a gate symbolize merely thresholds, "demarcating the crucial points in the spatial arrangement of the settlement". Their arrangement indicates the hierarchy of the city, separating the old palace from the upper and lower quarters of the town. The access lanes leading into the inner town are marked by such stupa-gates.

Evidence for the heyday of Buddhist culture and its intense cultural and political relations with neighbouring spheres is reflected by the painted wooden book covers of the famous Gilgit manuscripts, which were found in 1931 in the monastery of Naupura near Gilgit.[691]

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[686] Fussman 1994, 59–60 fig. 3.

[687] Alchi and Khalatse: Orofino 1990, figs 17, 18, 30, 39, 40. Denwood 2007, 52 fig. 5. Mulbekh: Weihreter 2010, figs 54, 57, 58.

[688] Francke, 'A Tibetan Inscription on the Darkot Pass', in Stein 1928, 45–47 and appendix L, 1050–1051. Denwood 2007, 49–50 fig. 4. A new photograph of the boulder with the Darkot *mchod-rten* and the inscription has been published by Mock 2013.

[689] Mock 2013, 15–16 with figs [+ pp. 12–17 with figs].

[690] Pieper 1980, 129 fig. 14–16.

[691] Shastri 1939, 5–8 pl. 1436–1438. MsC 1 and 2 was first published by Banerjee 1968 and 1991, 141–147 pl. 62–66. MsC 3 was published by Pal – Meech-Pekarik 1988, 41–44 p. 1–3. For an analysis of the three painted covers, see: Klimburg-Salter (ed.) 1982, 88 fig. 30–33; 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1993.

7 Merchants of the Silk Road

7.1 Iran and Sogdiana[692]

During the reign of Buddhism, other religious traditions co-existed with it in the Upper Indus Valley, demonstrating the ethnic diversity of this region. The most remarkable testimony of Iranian presence in the mountain region consists of eight images showing the characteristic fire-altar, the supreme icon of worship in Zoroastrian religion during various periods in Iranian art, from Achaemenid times onwards. The veneration of fire is testified for the first time most impressively in the relief on the façade above the mausoleum of Darius I (the Great) at Naqš-i Rustam.[693] In the scene, which is towered over by the symbol of a winged disc, thought to represent the chief god of the Persians, Ahuramazda, the Great King is shown upon a podium, armed with a bow and standing in front of a fire altar, thus demonstrating his profession of faith and the final introduction of Zoroastrianism as state religion. Yet one generation before Cyrus the Great (559–529 BC), northeast Iran came under the influence of the religious teacher and prophet, whose main region of teaching was Khwarezm (Chorasmia), where around 586 BC he converted king Vištāspa, the last of his royal dynasty.[694] When Cyrus incorporated his territory into the Achaemenid Empire fifty years later, his empire may have come under the influence of the new religion. "In Zoroastrian cosmogony, fire is created by *Asha Vahishta*, with the help of the old Iranian fire god, *Ātar*. Fire is the primary element of *Asha*, the cosmic order, which controls the material world, and represents the moral standards and righteousness by which the mortals are judged").[695] Fire-altars are also the most important single novelty on Achaemenid seals as the focus of a symmetrical design, flanked by worshippers of different status. Scenes with the fire-altar occur also in the art of Gandhara in apparently Buddhist context, which has been interpreted to symbolize the Buddhist concept of Enlightenment.[696] The interpretation of ceremonies connected with fire-altars, which clearly render the Zoroastrian form, as representations of Brahmanical and Vedic fire-rituals, known as *ataš dadgah, ataš aduran* and *ataš bahram*, together with the *haoma* ritual, the holy sacrifice, has been taken into consideration. But, the altar is also an attribute of the Kuṣāṇa Dynasty and of official members belonging to the ruling class, which since the period of Achaemenid predominance are partially of Iranian origin.[697]

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[692] The title of this paragraph was not present in the manuscript. It was added in order to balance the text of the Chapter.

[693] Ghirshman 1964a, 230–232 fig. 280.

[694] Henning 1951 discusses three possible dates of Zoroaster: 630–553, 628–551, and 618–541 BC [+ See Gnoli 1980b, Gnoli 2000].

[695] Here HH left the annotation: "*(nach Basirov 2001, 164: kontrolle)*".

[696] + The reader can here consider also Verardi 1994.

[697] Bivar 2005. In Achaemenid seal iconography the fire or incense altar appears in two types: Moorey 1979, 221–223.

The fire-stand in its earlier rather compact form as attested at Shatial shows a basis, a massive pillar and a table with horns at its corners and a wedge-shaped object in the center.[698] A similar type was struck on coins of the Kuṣāṇa period since the reign of Vāsudeva I (ca. 190–227 AD). It occurs also on the reverse of Hūṇa coinage of the Alχon tribe and on gems of the 5th century.[699] There the fire-altars are flanked by two attendants. The Hūṇa coinage is derived from that of the Sasanians. This motif occurs also on the reverse of the silver drammas of Skandagupta (c. 455–468), which were current in the western provinces of the Gupta Empire.[700] Obviously, this fire-altar type is the earliest to be depicted in Indian coinage, where this motif continued to be struck on West Indian coinage between 9th and 13th century.[701] The early Medieval Gadhia coins show on their reverse the fire-altar, which gradually degenerated during their circulation under the local dynasties, beginning with that of the Gūrjara and ending with the Paramāra. Jettmar inferred from the relatively late occurrence of this altar shape in Shatial, that the former control of this important bridgehead by the Hephtalites had been taken over by the "White Huns", the Chionites, "who had their base in the south".[702] A remarkable clay seal from the cave site of Kashmir Smast shows the fire-altar with two horns on its table, flanked by two attendants, a king and an adorant sacrificing liquids.[703] Its inscription reveals the name of the seal's owner Mihira, resident of Sāmbapur in Multan which is known from the practise of the Sun cult.

Until now, eight engravings of fire-altars demonstrate also the existence of the Iranian religion of Zoroaster, which possibly was introduced to the east by Sogdian merchants from their centres between Amu Darya (Oxus) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes) during the Kuṣāṇa period.[704] The strict Zoroastrian cult practice of the sacred flame, observed only by a small minority in the Iranian empire, has a long tradition in Iranian religion, which was spread throughout the empire of the Arsacids and Sasanians. The wall paintings of Pendžikent with the depiction of fire-altars and offering procedures are striking evidence of this religion in Sogdia.

The majority of these engraved fire-altars – four examples –consisting of a basis, a massive pillar and a table with horns at its corners and a wedge-shaped object in the center, as mentioned earlier, have been found at Shatial. This bridgehead obviously served as an emporium, where traders from Central Asia are represented by 565 inscriptions in Sogdian, the lingua franca of the Silk Road, a language related to Middle Iranian. Until their discovery at this site and in Thor, Sogdian inscriptions were known only from coins minted in Bukhara and Samarkand, from documents and art objects found in Sogdiana, in the trading colonies along the Silk Route, and from a few graffiti in Ladakh. As early as the 3rd century Sogdian merchants from the area around Samarkand in present-day Uzbekistan first entered the Upper Indus after organizing the trans-Asiatic trade along the Silk Road from China to Syria. These merchants were also active on the caravan routes via Kashmir or Gandhara to India. As known from the Sogdian community living in the Western Market of the Tang capital Chang'an during the 7th and 8th century, there were also craftsmen, metalworkers, artists and acrobats, as depicted also in carved images (Gukona 66:A; Mostar Nala 41:A, 42:1), who may have used the Indus route. The type of altar depicted in the rock art finds its counterparts during the Parthian period.[705] In the T'ang capital Chang'an existed at least six Manichaean and Zaratustrian temples, five of which were located near the Western Market.

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[698] Jettmar – Thewalt 1985, 23.

[699] Göbl 1967 vol. II, 214; vol. IV, emissions 53, 71, 108, 117, 118, 138, 175, G 51, 52, 59, especially pl. 39.

[700] Altekar 1957, 254–257, pl. 18, 11–18.

[701] Abels 1982.

[702] Jettmar 1989c, XLVIII–XLIX.

[703] Bopearachchi – Landes – Sachs 2003, 380 no. 333.

[704] Jettmar 1988, 150–152; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 64–65 no. 7; MANP 2, 34–35; MANP 5, 2005, 37 pl. 25, no. 37:12; MANP 7, 2005, 71 pl. 27, no. 106:7. Nasim Khan 1997, 99–100, fig. 1 divided the altars into two main forms, see also Arif 2001. Rock carvings showing fire-altars of a different type are known from Sado Maso in Khirthar Mountains, Sindh: Kalhoro 2009, 101–102 fig. 13.

The inscription Shatial 36:38 written by a Sogdian trader refers to the place in southwestern Xinjiang from where the merchant came to Shatial:[706] "Nanai-vandak, the son of Narisaf, has come (here) on the tenth day, where he received the spirit of the sacred place Kārt, to reach quickly Kharvandan and to see with pleasure my brother in good health".

This inscription is of remarkable importance because Kārt could be identified as the place Shatial itself, and because Kharvandan is known as Taškurgan. And the description of Kārt as a "sacred place" could indicate the existence of a Manichaean shrine there.

The Sogdian inscriptions reveal the main importance of this site at the river crossing as an emporium by the large number of Sogdian, Parthian and Middle Persian personal names, often with the addition of a patronymic and even of the grandfather's name.[707] Typical examples are 'Nanēfarn, the son of Nanēvandak' with the added patronymic, 'Ruthakk the (son) of Manthreni, grandson of Shetghonak' (Shatial) or 'Nanai-nazt the son of Kundakk, grandson of …' with the added formula of the grandfather's name. The epigraphical material yields a singular corpus of Sogdian names to be regarded as a cross-section of names used by males of a particular social group consisting of merchants. They include well-known names, such as Sāsān, Pāpak and Shāpūr. Ethnic terms occur as personal names: Hun, Indian, Kuṣāṇ.[708] The so-called "Sacred Rocks" of Haldeikish record the visit of the "son of Asp-yo[dh], (grandson) (?) of Makhch, the ɣ'tk".[709] Other Sogdian inscriptions reveal only: Dhūtik (Shatial 53:19, Ba Das 24:1). Theophoric names most frequently mention the divinities Nanē and Wakhush(u), the Oxus, but also Ahura Mazdā,[710] Dhrēmachk (Gukona 27:2), the masculine name of the Greek goddess Demeter and Vaghi-thvar, gift of the god (Shatial 31:53, 39:80, Gukona 28:2). The widespread number of Sogdian and Bactrian inscriptions along the routes in the Upper Indus Valley and as far as Hunza testify its eminent role as a multicultural crossroads not only for pilgrims and travellers, but also for the long-distance trade between Sogdia in western Central Asia, Dunhuang at the eastern junction of the Silk Roads around the Tarim Basin, and routes to Northern Pakistan and to Ladakh in a triangular network.

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[705] + HH added this quote here: "(Jettmar 1988)".

[706] Sims-Williams 1989a, 133 pl. 216 and 1989b, 23 no. 254. Jettmar 2002, 112.

[707] Sims-Williams 1986, 1989a, 1989b and 1992.

[708] + HH added this quote here: "(Sims-Williams 1989, 133)".

[709] Sims-Williams 1992, 25, 32, no. 662.

[710] + HH added this quote here: "(Sims-Williams 1989)".

An exceptionally designed stupa veneration in Ziyarat (100:A) indicates that foreigners from Central Asia even performed a Buddhist ritual.[711] The adorant holds in his right hand an incense burner and in his left a flower, more likely resembling a lotus rather than a three-petalled wild tulip (Ziyarat 100:7), which Jettmar explained a "reinterpretion of the winged mythical creature" appearing over the hero's shoulders in Sogdian wall paintings. He is dressed in an elaborate girded kaftan, which is decorated by floral pattern and dots in characteristic Central Asian style. Jettmar's interpretation, that "the patron while adoring the stūpa was an Indian, but his artist was obviously a Sogdian", seems a little far-fetched. The depicted devotee, perhaps a noble Sogdian, with his head band or head-gear and a sword, which hangs from the belt, resembles the kneeling armed man in profile on a stone relief of Central Asian type originating from Pakistan or Afghanistan.[712] Girded caftans with floral patterns are worn by armed noble men in a bacchanal scene in a Sogdian wall painting from Pendžikent in Tadjikistan.[713] Also ancient Turkic nobles were sometimes dressed in such luxurious ornamented silk kaftans as testified by anthropomorphic stone figures, the *balbals*, in Russian Altai and in Ubur– Changaj in Mongolia.[714]

Another singular composition from Shatial (17:29) shows apparently a Sogdian adorant in his characteristic Central Asian girded robe. He is depicted in kneeling position offering a sacrifice at a fire-altar on a raised platform.[715] According to the accompanying Sogdian inscription (17:13), the person's name is *Sanākrām*, a noble lady. Bandini did not exclude the possibility that a woman was shown here.[716] However, normally only men could perform a fire ceremony.

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[711] MANP 10, 2011, no. 100:7. Jettmar-Thewalt 1987, 22 with fig.; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 42 fig. 1; Jettmar 2002, pl. 18. Dar 2006, 222 pl. 87 saw in the worshipper a Sogdian devotee.

[712] Antonini 1979, 283–284 fig. 1 (Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale di Roma) [+ Now part of the newly established Museo delle Civiltà (MuCiv), Rome]. Bandini compares the head-gear of the figure from Ziyarat with that of a head carving at Shatial (MANP 2, 1997, 17–18. no. 39:112), which recalls portraits on Bactrian coinage (Göbl 1967, II, 154; IV, pl. 21 no. 145).

[713] Temple I, room 10: Belenizki 1980 [Belenitskii] 1980, 42 with text figure.

[714] The connection is drawn in Kubarev – Kubarev 2013, 57 fig. 61, 28 (Altai); 62, 17 (Ziyarat); 66 (Ubur-Changaj). [+ See Kubarev G.V. 2017].

[715] Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 58 no. 2.

[716] MANP 2, 1997, 11–12.

7.2 Images of crosses: Christian symbol or cosmic design?

Besides Zoroastrianism the Sogdians brought also other religions to China such as Manichaeism, which goes back to the Parthian aristocrat Mani (ca. 216–277 AD), as well as Nestorian Christianism. Some isolated Nestorian crosses have been assumed to testify this transfer by Christian missionaries or monks, who accompanied the merchant caravans. Crosses of Nestorian or Greek type are known from sites along the routes leading from the Upper Indus Valley in the Diamer District as far as Haldeikish in the Hunza Valley, in Yasin and in the Dumsum Valley in Baltistan.[717] Some of these crosses seem to resemble a group of bronze seal-amulets in the shape of a Nestorian or Maltese cross from Ordos, which were attributed to Nestorian Christians in Ordos, called Öngüt who lived there during the 13th and 14th centuries.[718] These so-called "Nestorian Crosses" which sometimes are decorated with swastikas have meanwhile proven to be non-Christian and belong to the compartment seals, which disseminated from Eastern Iran through Central Asia to Northern India during the late third and early second millennium BC.[719] Diverging from the earlier interpretation of the engraved crosses as Christian symbols, the crosses have been seen as cosmic signs similar to the Buddhist *maṇḍala* or protective signs of magic-apotropaic signification, signs with an shamanistic background, or just as normal *tamgas*. The first rock carvings showing this symbol of the so-called Nestorian type were found by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit in 1976 at Kuno Das near the confluence of the rivers Hunza with Gilgit. A date during the later Buddhist period up to the 9th millennium AD has been proposed.[720]

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[717] Carvings of crosses in different variations are known from Hodar [Hodur], Khomar Das, Thalpan, Gukona, Mostar Nala, Ame Ges, Kuno Das and Haldeikish: MANP 3, 1999, 63 pl. 67, no. 36:18; MANP 7, 2005, 209 pl. 27, no. 195: 406; MANP 10, 2011, 157 no. 21:1; MANP 11, 2013 [+ here HH added an unnecessary "???"]: Gukona: 63:3, 66:1–2, Mostar Nala 138:5, Ame Ges 1:17, 25. See also Bressan 1993, 226–227; Dani 1995, 81 with fig. Several engraved crosses of Greek or Nestorian (Maltese) type, appearing with other symbols, 13 Sogdian, 9 Arabic, 8 Tibetan and 2 Śāradā inscriptions, are known from Tangtsé (Drangtse) in Ladakh, reported by the missionary F. E. Shawe to the Moravian Mission in 1906 (Francke 1925, 369–370 pl. 2 no. 4 and Müller 1925, 372 pl. 3; Benveniste 1938, 503; Sims-Williams 1993, 151–153, 157, 158 pl. 1b, 2, 3). After the restudy of the inscriptions the crosses have been interpreted by Vohra 1995 [+ 1994 most probably], 1999 as *tamgas* and not as Christian symbols. The inscriptions are dated to the late 1st millennium AD.

[718] These amulets were possibly later than the carvings of Baltistan and Ladakh. The 9th century dating of the Drangtse materials (Ladakh, Sims-Williams 1993) places the other crosses documented just to the west in Pakistan's Upper Indus valley in a fairly secure phase perhaps (see Olivieri 2023b).

[719] Biscione 1985, 96 pl. IV a–b. Baghestani 1997.

[720] Klimkeit 1979, 103–104 fig. 1–2. Vohra 1999, 284. 289 pl. 1 and 15 interpreted them also as normal *tamgas* and not as Christian symbols. Maltese crosses occur also in the painted decoration of Kot Dijian-pottery from layer 6 at Rehman Dheri, Gomal Valley NWFP (2500–1900 BC), see: Durrani 1988, 88 fig. 56, 16. [+ Along the course of the Upper Indus, at Kono Das, just at the junction of the Skardu and Gilgit valleys, in 1976 a series of petroglyphs engraved on a now demolished boulder were documented and published (Klimkeit 1979). Similar crosses with inscriptions had already been found a little farther east, again along the Upper Indus valley, in Ladakh at Drangtse

7.3 Celestial horses [Table 27.2]

An extraordinarily elegant drawing at Thalpan of a riderless noble horse with head harness, blanket and saddle, apparently ambling, may also indicate Sogdian influence in this region.[721] The outline of the single horse is drawn with a sharp metal chisel. The representation corresponds in some details to the figural ornament in the form of a horse with crenelated mane and topknot, carved in low relief and gilded on the interior of a Sasanian silver plate in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, dating to the 6th to 7th centuries.[722] The theme is closely associated with royalty and occurs frequently in Assyrian and Achaemenid art, on seals also in the same ambling pose.[723] The motif is present occasionally on Sasanian sealstones too, but a more remarkable testimony of it is held by a Iranian soldier in the lower register of the rock relief at Bishapur VI in South Iranian Fars, in which the king of kings Shapur II (309–379 AD) celebrates his triumph over the Romans in Mesopotamia under Constantinus the Great (325–337 AD) and over Christians in his own empire or rather his victory over the Kuṣāṇa.[724]

The other carving of a trotting horse, fully adorned but without saddle and apparently created by the same artist, shows additional pecking. Two other images from Thalpan and Ziyarat showing horses in the same noble posture in profile seem to be local copies of the former prototypes. Similar pictures in mural paintings at Pendžikent from the 7th – 8th century – as well as in modified images at Ajanta, Alchi and Sumtsek in Ladakh – seem to represent a status symbol of an aristocratic society in Central Asia and in the Middle East. The mural painting on the southern wall of the hall excavated in 1965 in Afrasiab at Samarkand in Uzbekistan

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(Francke 1925; Gropp 1974). The *editio princeps* of the known Sogdian inscriptions from Ladakh is Sims-Williams 1993. Among the Drangtse inscriptions are two that are certainly Christian (*ibid.*). See again Olivieri 2023b].

[721] Dani 1983a, 238 no. 194.195; Jettmar 1984a, 208 fig. 15; Thewalt 1984, 210–213 figs 7–10. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 24 pl. 21; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 56–57 no. 7; MANP 6, 2003, 154 no. 30:240. According Markus Mode the horse images of Thalpan were created directly after Sogdian models, or even by Sogdian artists themselves (Mode 1993 [+?], 57 figs 34–35; 1993, 91–92 fig. 24); Hinüber 1989b, 87 assumed Vicitradeva and Varuṇeśvara, who may have been associated with the powerful patron of Buddhism Kuberavahāna, as donors of the Thalpan horse carvings, which show some stylistic similarities to the delicate miniature stupa images commissioned by the two worshippers. [+ I am not sure about the above reference to Mode 1993. Initially HH pointed to Mode 1990, but it does not exist in the author's bibliography (https://www.orientarch.uni-halle.de/dept/staff/mode.htm) On the blanket decoration see Faccenna 1995].

[722] Gunter – Jett 1992, 139–141 pl. 20. The single riderless horse with blanket and saddle as an essential theme in Assyrian, Achaemenid and Eurasian Art is discussed by Borchhardt – Bleibtreu 2008.

[723] Borchhardt – Bleibtreu 2008, 180 pl. 10, 2.4.

[724] For the different interpretations of the scene, see: Vanden Berghe 1984, 88 fig. 11, 142 no. 79. Vanden Berghe 1993, 85 fig. 71 (triumph over Romans and Christians). – Ghirshman 1964a, 164–165 fig. 225 (conquest of the Kuṣāṇa). [+ The reader may find useful Callieri 2014, and Grenet et al. 2007 (on the newly discovered Sasanian relief at Rag-e Bibi)].

illustrates a large procession with riders on elephants, horses and camels, but also persons and birds moving to a building. The scene has been interpreted as the arrival of the bride for the king of Samarkand, a bridal procession. But the representation of a riderless noble horse with saddle and head harness obviously symbolizes its deceased owner as testified in Sogdian death rituals. Therefore, an interpretation of the Thalpan horses as vicarious for dead noblemen seems therefore also imaginable. The image of geese arranged in couples, which accompany the soul in Central Asian shamanistic rituals, confirm this interpretation.[725] Saddled but riderless ambling horses in the fine relief panels of a Sogdian funerary couch in the Miho Collection at Shiga in Japan suggest the same ritual background, in which the horse is probably a sacrificial animal destined for Mithra.[726] The scenes there pertain to Sogdian funerary ceremonies according to Zoroastrian ritual. The reliefs of the funerary couch were executed in honour of a deceased Sogdian caravan leader in China during the second half of the 6th century. A mural painting inside the passageway of the tomb of Liang Yuanzhen (died in 699 AD) in Guyuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, depicts corresponding saddled horses with their grooms.[727] According to the inscribed epitaph, the tomb's owner was the late Lord Liang, a Sogdian reclusive scholar of the Grand Zhou Dynasty. During the reign of the empress Wu Zetian (690–705 AD). He died at the age of 72. The tomb belongs to a cemetery in which the Shi family was buried; the cemetery revealed the highest concentration of Central Asian Sogdian funerals in China.

The head harness showing the muzzle simultaneously used in association with the cavesson or with the snaffle is common both to the representations at Thalpan and the mural paintings of Ajanta of the 5th – 6th century.[728] The Thalpan horses have been compared also with similar types of excellent production known from the T'ang Dynasty in China.[729] A wall painting of the Northern Zou period (557–581) in cave 290 at Dunhuang illustrates a saddled horse in similar elegant attitude being trained by a horse breeder of the *hu* minority.[730] In Chinese mythology the horse is connected also with the sun. Stories about celestial and supernatural horses appear in records of the Han period. Especially horses from Wusun and Dayuan are praised as marvels.

Visible upon the hind leg of a trotting horse from Thalpan is a brand mark, which shows the engraved Chinese sign *yue* (moon).[731] But no relation exists between this animal and the celestial body. The horse is depicted in the same ambling pose as in the aforementioned two masterpieces, yet without their elegance.

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[725] Mode 1993, 91–92 fig. 24. Grenet 2007, 13 fig. 10.

[726] Whitfield 2004, 112–115 no. 1.

[727] Wertmann 2015, 43–44 fig. 29, 1–3.

[728] Deloche 1990, 12 fig. 19.

[729] Dani 1983a, 52 nos 194 and 195.

[730] Wenjie 1989, I 307 no. 134 pl. 120. In similar position the white horse in the jātaka of the horses in nine colours is performed at cave 257 (Northern Wei, 386–534 AD): op. cit., I 268 no. 25 pl. 229.

[731] MANP 8, 2007, no. 244:6. Thewalt 1984, 212–213 fig. 10. For the reading of the sign, see: Höllmann 1993, 63.

Furthermore, the horse could also be interpreted as symbol of local deities as passed down by a tradition in the valley of Gor. The tutelary male god Taiban there is symbolized by a "rude sculpture of a horse", called "Taiban's horse" by the locals.[732] His festivals as well as his association with the horse was still reported by Jettmar after his visit in 1958, but they seem to have vanished now. The local goddess Murkhum, the mistress of mountain goats and guardian of mother and child as well as hunters was worshipped in the Haramosh Valley.[733] Both Taiban and Murkhum have been connected with Syavush and Anahita, the central deities of Khorezm. The horse plays an important role among the mountain dwellers of the Hindukush and Karakorum. Its possession confers great prestige upon the owner.[734]

The motif of the riderless noble horse could also be connected with Buddhist traditions, in which the white stallion Kaṇṭhaka, the favorite horse and spiritual guide of prince Siddhārtha, symbolize his "Great Farewell" or Renunciation and, therefore, could represent the Enlightened Buddha himself.[735] The equation of the Thalpan horse with the Buddhist motif is worth considering, if von Hinüber's assumption may be accepted that the local Buddhist venerators Vicitradeva and Varuṇeśvara were the donors of the Thalpan horse carvings.[736] Their other religious donations are engraved around the Buddhist masterpieces, commissioned by Kuberavāhana at Thalpan. The image of the "king of the horses" would perform the story of the Great Renunciation, when in the palace courtyard of Kapilavastu the prince's loyal groom Chaṇḍaka with Kaṇṭhaka were waiting for the master to leave at daybreak his home, his family and all delights of the life to endure the future life of an ascetic wanderer. According to a hagiography reported by Faxian, the noble horse died of grief over being separated from its master, and was reborn in the Trayastriṃśa heaven as the deva Kaṇṭhaka.[737] The white stallion Kaṇṭhaka plays a great part in Gandharan iconography: depicting its birth and showing scenes of Bodhisattva's life with the best of the horses, his ride, the Bodhisattva as archer, his four confrontations with old age, disease, death, and with a monk.[738] The Great Departure, which shows different types of composition, is one of the most depicted scenes equal to the Birth of Siddārtha. The motif was also adopted by artists of the monumental wall-paintings of Central Asia, where it is found in the cave paintings of Qočo (Kocho) and Dunhuang (cave 329).[739]

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[732] Biddulph 1880, 15. Jettmar 1975, 211–212; 2002, 5, 7, 32. Thewalt 1984, 213. Litvinskij 2003, 58–59.

[733] Jettmar 1958, 253; 1975, 209–210 fig. 3. A differing role of Murkhum in Bagrot is described by Snoy 1975, 216–217.

[734] Frembgen 1984 [+ after "white stallion" HH added: "(Leibroß)". The reader may find interesting the depiction of Kaṇṭhaka as a Central Asian horse in a relief from Kanaganahalli photographed by Christian Luczanits no. CL0037.06 reproduced in Olivieri 2022a, 152 fig. 55; on Kuṣāṇa trade in Central Asian horses with India and Funan (Vietnam), see Falk ed. 2015, 124–125, Sources 112–113].

[735] Foucher 2003 [1949], 76–79. For Kaṇṭhaka as symbol for the reception of Buddhist concepts in Central Asia, see: Klimkeit 1984. [+HH left this note: "*Zu Kanthaka*: Knox, Zwalf 1996. (riderless, harnessed h.)".

[736] Hinüber 1989b, 87.

[737] Legge 1886, 70. Beal 1869, 92.

[738] For a digression about stallion Kaṇṭhaka, see: Fischer 1980, 276–294 figs 10, 13–20. For reliefs with Siddhārta's horse in scenes around "The Great Departure" see the following:
- Gandhara: Ingholt 1957, 61–62 nos 49, 51. Kurita 2003, I 309. Zwalf 1996, no. 173–174 (Takht-i-Bāhī), 176–179.

One of the Seven Precious Possessions of *cakravartin*, the universal monarch, apart from the jewels of the elephant *(hastiratna)*, wife *(kanyāratna)*, minister *(mantriratna)*, general *(senāpatiratna)*, wheel *(cakraratna)*, and riches *(cintāmaṇiratna)* is symbolized also by the jewel of the riderless horse *(aśvaratna)*. The universal monarch Mandhātā, the central figure in the *Mandhātā Jātaka*, is endowed with his seven treasures and four supernatural powers. The motif occurs in the reliefs from Sanchi and Bharhut, and Jaggayyapeta, Andhra Pradesh, dating to the Sunga Period, but also in a painting of cave 60 at Kizil in Xinjiang.[740] An identification of the remarkable horse carvings from Thalpan as one of the seven jewels of *cakravartin* is supported by the occurrence of this symbol in the Chaghdo "fresco" in East Baltistan, which shows the veneration of stupas by a princely clan. The ambling horse bears on its saddle apparently the jewel of riches, thus referring to the *Mandhātā Jātaka*.

7.4 Sasanian textile patterns: waterbirds[741]

Alam Bridge revealed another motif that can be traced from a popular Sasanian textile pattern, coming from the Sogdiana of the 5th century AD. The carving shows a pair of waterbirds, which are connected by a string held in their beaks. The decorative motif of a peacock or bird, perhaps a duck, holding a garland of pearls in its beak is known from Sasanian art. It occurs too in the same detailed repetition with a peacock or pigeon facing each other with their heads in the centre of medallions in wall paintings at Afrasiab near Samarqand, Varakša in

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- Aziz Dheri: Nasim Khan 2010, 114 no. 124.
- Thareli, great stupa in court D: pl. 104, 4–5; 110, 25–26; stupa in court C 106: pl. 138, 11.22: Mizuno – Higuchi (eds) 1978.
- Charg-paṭē in District Dīr: Swati 2012, 3 pl. 2b; 8 pl. 9.
- Main stupa of Saidu Sharif I: Faccena 1995.
- Relief panel of the Great Departure in Los Angeles, see: Pal 1977, no. 11.
- Great stupa of Amaravati: Knox 1992, 58, 109, 114, 117, 144, 146, 147, 157, 158, 185.
- Turfan: Grünwedel 1912, 214. Yaldiz et al. 2000, 30 no. 42. Calcutta, Indian Museum: Bussagli 1984, 190; 1996, 331. Royal Ontario Museum: Jongeward 2003, 85–86 no. 18.

[739] Qočo (Kocho): Le Coq 1913, 12 with fig.; Le Coq – Waldschmidt 1933, 66–67, pl. 32a. Klimkeit 1984, 93–94 fig. 2. Yaldiz et al. 2000, 220–221 no. 319.

[740] Jaggayyapeta: Huntington 2001, 85–86 fig. 5.36 [+ I am not sure about the reference to S. Huntington's work. HH originally listed Huntington 2001, which I could not find in the author's bibliography; I would suggest correcting it to a new 2001 edition of Huntington 1985]. – Kizil: Le Coq 1933, 56–58 fig. 41 pl. 23.

[741] [+ On this subject the reader may find interesting the recent articles by M. Compareti, in particular Compareti 2020].

the north of Bukhara in Uzbekistan, and Bamiyan in Afghanistan, Taq-i Bustan reliefs in Iran. Furthermore, this motif appears arranged in friezes on pedestals in cave 60, Albert Grünwedel's "Cave of the ring-bearing pigeons", at Kizil in Chinese Turkestan, but also on metal plates, stone cutting and textiles or silk fabrics from Persia, Sogdiana as far as China, dating from the 6th – 7th century.[742] A silk bag in the Musée Guimet in Paris shows as the principal motif the drawing of a bird in dual position, perhaps a duck, holding in its beak a pearl necklace, another example of this common Sasanian pattern.[743] It may have been found near a temple in the Duldur Aqur area. The waterbird, which symbolises benevolence, is one of the symbols of Mithra and other deities of the Mazdaic pantheon. The bird Varagan searches for light in the ocean and is an incarnation of Verethraghna, the Iranian god of victory.

7.5 Heraldic symbols: tamga *or* nisan

Signs devoting ownership or heraldic symbols, the so-called *tamgas* or *nisan (nišan)* known from different periods in Sarmatia, Northern Tokharistan, and Sogdiana, provide further evidence of the Sogdian's presence in the upper Indus region.[744] Clusters of these signs occur mainly in Shatial, but also in other sites accompanied by Sogdian and sometimes Bactrian inscriptions.[745] Jettmar linked the occurrence of these signs and inscriptions with the Chionites, who protected the routes from Sogdiana to the region south of the Hindukush. The Chionites, the nomadic people of the Kanju (K'ang-chü), during the 5th century were subjected by another tribe, the Hephthalites, the Asiatic Huns or the white Huns, according to Procopius (*Bell. Pers.* I,3), who seized power in the Sogdiana. This emblem used also as a trade mark may testify the membership of the merchant to a certain Chionite-Hephthalite clan or an ethnic group. A *nisan* in the shape of a whirl of three hooks, a triskele, is a typical sign for Samarkand in Sogdiana during the 6th to 8th centuries.[746] The other state *tamga* of Samarkand is known from Sogdian coins of Chinese form found in the town itself and on bullae from Kafir Kala.[747] Moreover, it was used by the Sarmatians even earlier during the 2nd century and in northern Tocharistan also in the 4th to 5th centuries, where this symbol occurs also on coins.[748]

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[742] Afrasiab, "Hall of Ambassadors" (7th century AD): Al'baum 1975. Belenizki 1980 [Belenitskii], 10–11 with text figure. Jeroussalimskaja 1993, 114 fig. 98. Feugère 1999–2000, 243 fig. 4. For more comparisons see the following:
- Varakša: Belenizki 1980 [Belenitskii], 204–205 with text figure.
- Bamiyan, group D, hall 1, two medallions (between end of 7th and mid-8th century, according Tarzi, ca. 620 AD): Tarzi 1977, 29, 128 pl. B 55, D 57 a-d. Tanabe 2004, 200–204, fig. 43, 47–54.
- Taq-I Bustan: Jeroussalimskaja 1993, 114, fig. 99.
- Kizil, cave 60 (7th century AD): Grünwedel 1912, 79 fig. 172. Le Coq 1922–23, III 25 no. 150; 1924, IV 25 pl. 150; Härtel 1982, 82 no. 19; Ghose 2008, 61 fig. 21.

[743] Found by Paul Pelliot in 1907: Feugère 1999/2000.

[744] + HH added the quote of "(Nasim Khan 1997, 100–104)".

[745] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 23; Jettmar 1988, 156–158; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 58– 59 no. 4–9. See also the image of a patron in Sogdian cloak, p. 43 no. 1. Ilyasov 2003.

[746] Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 23; Jettmar 1988, 158 fig. 9. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 58–59 no. 9. Tamga S 2 according Göbl. Ilyasov 2003, 137–139 pl. 1, 27–29.

7.6 Images and attributes of Lord Śiva: liṅga *and* triśūla

The presence of the other great religion besides Buddhism, such as the Śivaism, is obvious from the occurrence of typical personal names in Brahmī inscriptions. A possible portrait of Śiva, the third in the Hindu trinity, at Thalpan (135:1) and other divine images from Dadam Das and from Thor North indicate the worship of Hindu gods, as attested even before the Kuṣāṇa period in the northwest of India with the cult of Supreme Śiva and his consort Pārvati.[749] The Śiva figure from Dadam Das, which is accompanied by his symbols sun and crescent (and perhaps a snail's shell, an attribute of Viṣṇu), holds a trident in his right hand. It is no coincidence that also found in Swat were an image of Śiva and another representation of a goddess testifying the significant diffusion of Hinduism in this region.[750] Apart from the few images of Hindu gods and other symbols there is only one remarkable figural representation of one of the most important gods, the preserver of the "Universe". A stone plaque from the Darel Valley shows the relief of Viṣṇu with an elephant.[751] Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang) even mentions in neighbouring Uḍḍiyāna, the U-chang of Faxian, the existence of "about ten temples of devas", a deity of the Vedic pantheon, and an important Śaiva school *(Kramasaṃpradāya)*, showing the tolerance of the rulers there towards this religion.[752] "Outside the western gate" of Puṣkalāvatī "a Deva (i.e. Śiva) temple" was also recorded by the pilgrim.[753] The presence of the Śiva cult also around the second royal centre of Gandhara, the old capital Gandhavati or Puṣkalāvatī near nowadays Charsadda, has recently been archaeologically attested by trident and bull symbols marked on hoop-handled seals and on a terracotta seal from Charsadda as well as on stamped pottery from Majuki Dherai.[754] The popularity of Śiva in Gandhara and the north Indian realms inherited by the Kuṣāṇa is both verified by overwhelming iconographic evidence and theophoric names containing that of the god abound in inscriptions of this period.[755]

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[747] Cazzoli – Cereti 2005.

[748] + HH added this note: "*(Aufsatz Ilyasov* [= Ilyasov 2003] *prüfen)*".

[749] Thalpan: Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 62 no. 12. Bandini refers to the missing third eye of Śiva, and therefore a reliable identification as this deity is not possible: MANP 7, 2005, 111 no. 135:1. MANP 5, 2005, 20–22 no. 1:12. Arif 2001, 114–115 fig. 1, 4, 6 and pl. 1. If the interpretation of the Thalpan carving (135:1) as the bust of Śiva *(ekamukhaliṅga)* is correct, it would depict one of the five faces of the god as represented in the cave-temple on Elephanta island in India: Kramrisch 1994, figs 7–15. Dani 1983a, 116 fig. 91 designates another standing crowned figure from Chilas II as Śiva. See also Arif 2001, 115 pl. 3.

[750] + On Swat, see Filigenzi 2015, Filigenzi 2023, Olivieri 2022b, Olivieri – Minardi 2023 (all with previous references).

[751] Dani 1983a, 220 no. 7 dates the relief to the 8th – 9th century.

[752] Beal 1884, I 121. See also: Tucci 1963b; 1977, 68.

[753] Beal 1884, I 109. Watters 1904–1905, 24.

Śiva, one of the principal Hindu gods occurring in many appearances, peaceful and destructive, has many attributes, the *triśūla*, trident, and the *liṅga*, the phallus symbol that forms the most dramatic symbol of his power and is usually placed as central votive object in his shrines.[756] Both symbols occur in the rock art of the Upper Indus. His characteristic *vāhana*, a divine vehicle, carrier or mount for a god is the bull Nandi. His sacred symbol, in the shape of a round column with its rounded upper end divided into two shields and standing on a basis, is found in sites such as Oshibat, Thalpan, Thor North and Haldeikish in Hunza.[757] In Thor North a worshipper holding a *triśūla*, an implement resembling a fork, is kneeling near this phallus-like object and has therefore been interpreted as *liṅga*, which in Hinduism is associated exclusively with Śiva. The scene of worship is completed by an altar of the 'horned pillar' type.[758] Hindu cult was practised in Gandhara between the 2nd and 6th century AD, as evidenced by a Śaiva monastic establishment at Kashmir Smast, situated at an altitude of 1100 m on the ancient cross route between Gandhara, present-day Peshawar Valley, and Uḍḍiyāna, the Malakand Division, 50 km northeast of Mardan. The site consists of the Great Cave, known as Kashmir Smast or Kashmir Ghār, and the spacious temple area. In the eastern buildings (*liṅgam* haven) a "some five feet high liṅga in marble was standing on a platform in front of the small cave", and in the so-called *liṅgam* shrine a marble *liṅga* with a round pedestal and cylindrical upper body was originaly erected.[759]

There is no other site along the Upper Indus Valley such as Shatial, where the phallus is found in so many reproductions. Most of the 32 images are drawn in outline, showing all details and even indicating ejaculation. Therefore, these graffiti convey an explicit sexual message and contrary to other phallus images do not represent a cult object or the Śivaliṅga, the phallus with one face.[760] An exceptional image of an *ekhamukhaliṅga* at Thalpan shows the front view of a Śiva bust on a three-stepped basis (Thalpan 135:1).[761] Images of a monkey with its upper part transformed into a phallus and of running phalli with attached animal legs and tail (Shatial 17:27, 30:21) can rather be assigned to the category of humorous graffiti with sexual background, which finds its most graphic expression in a drastic homosexual metaphor, which Jettmar interpreted as a reflected "taunt directed by a Sogdian, non-Buddhist merchant against his Buddhist partners".[762] The multitude of these graffiti at the emporium of Shatial and at a resting place of Sogdian merchants, as well as the absence of such sexual scenes at the main Buddhist sites could be explained by the long caravan tours from Central Asia across the Karakorum.

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[754] Mohammadzai – Khan 2011, 51, 70 pl. 14. Mohammadzai 2014, 55–56 no. 1B, 16B, 2F.

[755] + On Gandhara, see Samad 2020 with refs., Carter 1995, *et cet.*

[756] Variants of the Śaiva cult object *mukhaliṅga*, the *ekhamukha-* and *trimukha-liṅgas* dating from the 3rd – 4th to the 9th – 10th century, from Pakistan have been published by Shah 2009.

[757] Jettmar 1988, 151–153 fig. 3. MANP 8, 2007, 101 pl. 32, no. 310:1 and 106 pl. 35, no. 322:4.

[758] + HH added the following note: "See Arif 2001." On an incised *liṅga* column from Butkara I, see Faccenna 2007 [= columns] [+ Olivieri 2018].

[759] Nasim Khan 2001, 224, 230–231 fig. 2 and 5, pl. 9–15 and 27–31.

[760] MANP 2, 1997, pl. 7–8. phalli indicating ejaculation; 1:16, 23,11, 25:4, 28,2, 36,129, 39.128, 40,32. [Bandini-] König, MANP 2, 1997, 19–20 indicated that the phallus drawings are depicted in horizontal position, whereas the Śivaliṅgam is always exposed as vertical object. An impressive phallic emblem with one face of Śiva *(ekamukhaliṅga)* is known from Madhya Pradesh (ca. 400 AD, red sandstone, H. 58 in.), Asian Art Museum of San Francisco: Pal 1978, 60 no. 6. A similar example

A similar lewd intention of an explicit homosexual background is seen in a singular scene at Thor North, where a male person is sexually attacked by an aggressive man with a large erected phallus. The intention of the artist to indicate that the men involved are Buddhists is obvious by drawing of prolongated earlobes for the attacked person and a *uṣṇiṣa* for the aggressor.[763]

In Shatial (28:1, 30:28, 129:36) three engraved phalli in vertical position are decorated with a scarf worn like a necktie. The *baitylos-liṅga* of this design as a religious symbol is found in Iran too and also in India since the Kuṣāṇa period, and can therefore be seen as a part of the foreign impact during the 4th to 6th century along the Upper Indus river.[764]

The trident, *triśūla*, known as a standard attribute of the Hindu Lord Śiva since the Gupta Period, is also attested in the rock art along the Upper Indus (Ba Das 3:1, 11:2). In the Sogdian emporium Shatial the symbol, showing predominantly a simple fork, is engraved near inscriptions, which can be dated between the fourth and 6th century AD.[765] The symbol apparently was copied from Poseidon images and appears first as a common iconographic element in association with a deity, Śiva, on the reverse of Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sasanian coins. The trident is apparently the most characteristic regular attribute of Shiva for the Kuṣāṇa, as evidenced

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from the Mathura area, Uttar Pradesh, is published by Vitali 1983, 64 fig. 44 (height 58 cm, 4th century, Gupta Dynasty). The sexual message of the Shatial graffiti is supported by two inscriptions in Brāhmī (31:5, 32), which stimulate sexual intercourse [+ see also Tucci 1968].

[761] Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 62 fig. 12. MANP 7, 2005, 111. [+ On the *ekhamukhaliṅga*, see Taddei 1962; on Hindu representations from Swat, see also Tucci 1963b, Taddei 1963, Taddei 1964–1965, Filigenzi 2006b, Filigenzi 2010, Filigenzi 2011, Olivieri 2010, Olivieri 2015a, Srinivasan – Olivieri 2018].

[762] Jettmar 1980b, 175; 1989c, LII.

[763] Jettmar 1989c, LII.

[764] Jettmar 1988, 4 fig. 5. [Bandini-] König in MANP 2, 1997, 19–20 fig. 36–39. A one-faced *liṅga* in Cave 4 at Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, 5th century (Gupta Period): Huntington 1985, 193 fig. 10.9. The cubical shrine of the Śiva Cave of Elephanta, Mahārāṣṭra of the 6th century (Kalacuri Period) contains a *liṅga* and a *yoni*, the vulva, symbolizing the unity within duality as a central Hindu conception. The sculpture of a *liṅga* stands at the back of a sanctuary of the Rāvaṇā Phadi Cave, Aihole, Karṇāṭaka in India, 6th century (Calukya Period): op. cit. 283 fig. 13.10–11.

[765] MANP 2, 1997, 33–34 pl. 17–19.

by the mintage since the first Kuṣāṇa king Kujula Kadphises (ca. 40–90 AD) and his immediate successors Vima Takto, Vima, Kadphises, Kaṇiṣka I, Huviṣka and Vasudeva I, but also the rulers of later Kuṣāṇa, such as Kaṇiṣka II, Vasiṣka, Kaṇiṣka III and Vasudeva II.[766] There, in his earlier form (Rudra), the god is holding a bow. In Shatial (34:161) a man in the typical Kuṣāṇa robe holds the symbol in the same manner as on coins of the Kuṣāṇa rulers.[767] The *triśūla* also appears in Buddhist iconography, in which the demon Māra holds this weapon. It is widespread in Western Asia since the late third millennium BC and especially since the Middle Bronze Age both as a normal tool or weapon and as a divine symbol for gods like Anu, Adad in Assyria, Tešub in Anatolia or Haldi in Urartu.[768]

There are many carvings of the *triśulā* standing upright, indicating that the route from Darel Nala upstream along the northern bank of the Indus Valley were used by Śivaites (Śaivas). The religious syncretism as universal spiritual phenomenon during the Kuṣāṇa period (ca. 40–360 AD) has been described as originating from the interaction between different ethnic groups following the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire and the spread of Hellenism. This process is evident in depictions of non-Buddhist folk gods, the *yakṣa*s and *yakṣī*s, in the art of Mathura of the Kuṣāṇa period and less common of Gandhara. The name of Hāritī written in Kharoṣṭhī near an anthropomorphic stupa at Chilas II does not necessarily correspond with the goddess together with her companion, the *yakṣā* Pāñcika (Kubera), who procures fortune and prosperity.[769] Hāritī, the ancient smallpox goddess *(yakṣi)*, according Buddhist legends, was converted by Śākyamuni into a protectress of children. A common and widespread symbol that appears in the rock art of the Upper Indus is the swastika motif. This ancient world-wide known symbol represents the order of the universe, which is divided into four sectors by the central cross. There are left-turning and right-turning swastikas, which in Buddhism symbolize the opposing forces of the universe.[770] In Shatial a total of 18 swastika engravings have been recorded in the two versions left- and right-turning.[771] One example is depicted near a *tamga* and a trident (Shatial 34:159), which in this combination might indicate its function as a *tamga*. Most of the swastikas are engraved near inscriptions, which would support a dating of the symbols between the 4th and 6th century.

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[766] Cribb 1997. 33–34. Giuliano 2004. [+ Here HH left an incomplete note which reads "(Maues and Azez I coins, but it is still missing in early Mathuran Śiva images)"].

[767] Göbl 1984, pl. 11 ff. See also Bandini [-König] in MANP 2, 1997, 10 fig. 11–12.

[768] Rossoni 1997 conveys an overview of the trident in Western Asia, referring to the *triśūla* on Kuṣāṇa coins of Vasudeva (p. 583 fig. 5, 6.).

[769] Dani 1983a, 114.116 fig. 89 interprets also the image as a representation of the goddess Hāritī. But "it could also be somebody's name": Fussman 1989, 11, 32–33 plate 10 and 12; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 17 plate 12.

[770] + HH left this note: "(*nach* Kenoyer 1998, 108. The motif occurs on seals from Moenjodaro (Kenoyer 1998, 85 fig. 5.10 cat no. 18)".

[771] + HH added this note "(Bandini, in MANP 2, [1997] 48–49 pl. 33)".

In the centre of a carved scene at Thor North is a sacral monument *(baitylos)* consisting of a phallus on a basis, apparently a *liṅga*, which can be seen with a horned altar. A kneeling worshipper holds a fork-shaped implement, similar to the *kerykeion* or caduceus of Hermes.[772] This scene may be reminiscent of the images on coins showing Vasudeva with a *triśula* and fire-altar and on the reverse Śiva with Nandi ("the happy one"), his bull Vāhana. Representations of the *baitylos-liṅga* are known from other sites such as Haldeikish.[773] The *liṅga* is the phallic emblem of Lord Śiva. It is the most popular of all Śaiva symbols and forms the central object of worship in most Śaiva temples.

A small rock carving assemblage above the once strategically important Partab Bridge revealed compositions showing the influence of unusual and especially Central Asian art traditions, which by their diverse themes correspond to sites at particular traffic junctions such as Haldeikish in Hunza, Alam Bridge and Shatial. The Partab Bridge, which was built just below the confluence of the Indus with the Gilgit River, connects the route from the outlet of the Rondu Gorge along the southern bank of the Indus with the Chilas-Gilgit road. The other important river crossing for the route from Baltistan to Gilgit, the Alam Bridge, is located a short distance above the confluence. An enigmatic veneration scene is depicted on a large boulder on the rocky slope on the right bank of the Indus, high above the Partab Bridge. There a bell-shaped blossom of a silhouetted flower on a large stem grows from a rectangular basis, evidently a tulip. A figure in veneration gestus, clearly recognizable as a rhesus monkey, sits on the edge of the basis.[774] The animal is also sacred in Buddhism, as the *Mahākapi Jātaka* demonstrates with the animal incarnation of the Buddha. As king of eighty thousand monkeys, the monkey-bodhisattva stretched his body from one tree to another across a stream, so that the other monkeys could cross the water course to escape from an attacking human king. Two more realistically drawn images of tulips with their bulbs confirm the identification of the flower. The depiction of this flower is unique in the rock art along the Upper Indus. A singular carving at Dadam Das (57:14) has been described as the possible image of a tulip, but it can be rather seen as a *tamga*.[775] The wild species of the tulip *(Tulipa clusiana* DC var. *chrysanta)*, which grows in the mountains of the Northern Areas, occurs near Quetta, as well as in northern Afghanistan and in Central Asia.[776] The wild Persian and Central Asian tulip is a widespread motif in the art of the Bronze Age to the Early Middle Ages in Central and West Asia.[777] The most ancient type of the tulip-flower consists of three petals as rendered in the diadem of Heracles on Greco-Bactrian coins of king Demetrios I and his successors. The Partap tulip images show the same number of petals. In Sasanian and Sogdian art, i.e. since the late 5th and early 6th centuries AD, the number of petals was increased from three to five, which is why the Partab images could be dated to the Early Buddhist period of the Upper Indus. (Dadam Das 57:14). Jettmar assigned the scene to a late Buddhist milieu, but doubted "whether the interpretation is possible in the frame of Buddhist iconography".[778] The tulip in North Afghanistan is considered a symbol of Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of prophet Muhammad, the fourth caliph from 656 to 661 and the first Imam of Shia Islam from 632 to 661. The esteem of the flower is known from different areas in Central Asia, where in the Ferghana Valley as an old tradition a tulip festival was performed in spring.[779] In a wall painting dated to the 7th to early 8th century from the Buddhist monastery Kala-i Kafirnigan in the Tajik part of Tocharistan, two noblewomen, a monk and another man in a procession hold lotus flowers.[780] This gesture of presenting another symbolic flower expresses the hope of rebirth in the paradise of Buddha Amitabha. The depiction of the tulip at Partab could replace the former Buddhist main symbol of the stupa during a transition period, when the new religion found its way into the Upper Indus region where Buddhism was still dominant.

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[772] Jettmar 1988, 151–153 fig. 3. For images of phallus-altars, see: Oshibat 17:15, Mostar Nala 104:6.

[773] Dani 1985a, 16 (rock 1, no. 10) fig. 16. Thalpan: Dani 1983a, 220 no. 177.

[774] The rock carving site, which consisted of few large boulders on the rocky slope, was noticed in 1988 by Muhammad Arif, then head of the Subregional Office of the Department of Archaeology & Museums at Gilgit (Arif 1992b, 97–98 pl. 1). Due to the extension of the KKH the assemblage with Buddhist images of high quality and inscriptions in Brāhmi and its later derivate Proto-Śāradā is nearly completely destroyed. Dani 1995, 76 refers to two boulders with then still visible images of horsemen and markhors, the carving of a svastika and a Brāhmi inscription. For the tulip rock, see: Jettmar 1992b, 26–27 with drawing; Jettmar 1997b, 517–519 fig. 2, 1989b, 183 pl. 25B and 2003, pl. 15, where the tulip is described as "main symbol in popular beliefs". The simplified images of two stupas (the finger-like type is known from Chilas, and the stepped or terraced type from Baltistan) showing regional different types may have been added by later Buddhist visitors from different regions.

[775] MANP 5, 2005, 35–36.

In Shatial on rock 36 two conspicuous motifs are depicted, one on top of the other, which can be brought in connection with a spiritual background. The engraved geometric diagram of a *yantra* (36:131) is widespread in the art of historical India and served as an aid in meditation. The lower picture belongs to the classical form of the so-called labyrinth, which is well represented in the rock art of Valcamonica in Italy.[781] With reference to the two motifs of "endless knot design" and "protective womb", Mark Kenoyer proposed a connection with geometric symbols of Mohenjodaro, traditionally associated with marriage, protection and fertility.[782]

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[776] Kitamura (ed.) 1964, 34.

[777] Katsumi Tanabe is owed a comprehensive study of the tulip depictions both in Central and West Asia: Tanabe 1999, where reference is made also to the unique tulip images from Partab Bridge on p. 66–67.

[778] Jettmar 1989b, 183 pl. 25B.

[779] Taube 2003, 131.

[780] Museum of National Antiquities, Dushanbe: After Baumer 2014, 203–204 fig. 170.

[781] The *yantra* carving was for the first time described by Jettmar 1985a, 769–771 fig. 17. Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 64–65 no. 5 *(yantra)* and no. 8 (labyrinth). For a more detailed interpretation of both motifs, see [Bandini-] König in: MANP 2, 1997, 36–37 and 53–55 pl. VIIb. – Painted labyrinth motifs in rock shelters of Pengawan, North Raisen District in Madhya Pradesh: Shukla 1996, 169 pl. 21, 6a–b. [+ The sentence is integrated [well represented]. On this motif in Valcamonica see Gavaldo 2012 with refs.].

[782] Kenoyer 1998, 109–110 fig. 6.13.

A warrior scene at Thalpan (Thalpan 268:2.3), found at the approach from the settlement terrace to the ravine of the Kiner Gah, is unparalleled along the Upper Indus and apparently represents the work of a foreigner from a distant country. The depicted foot soldiers bear witness to the presence of a foreign military power from the southern lowlands perhaps connected with defence actions by the Darada forces of Chilas against northern invaders. The carving depicts two attacking warriors, one on top of the other, dressed in loin-cloths and a distinct headdress or helmets, and holding long swords and elongated, curved shields, which end at the top in two points. This singular representation clearly repeats a warrior type known from battle scenes in Indian rock art, as rendered in the painted rock shelters of Adamgarh, Bhimbetka and Satkunda in Central India.[783]

7.7 Sogdians and Indians[784]

Besides the rich epigraphic material in Brāhmī, which mostly dates from the 5th to 8th century AD, there are also inscriptions in Sogdian that mainly belong to circa the 3rd – 4th and 6th centuries. They document the presence of this important ethnic group of doubtless merchant origin. They comprise more than 600 Iranian inscriptions, ca. one dozen in Bactrian, Middle Persian and Parthian, whereas the majority – 565 – in Sogdian, is only from Shatial in Indus Kohistan.[785] Sogdian inscriptions are found along both routes leading along the Hunza and Indus rivers from Haldeikish in Hunza with 4 examples, Alam Bridge with 4, Thor North with 19,[786] Dadam Das with 56 and Oshibat with 26 examples [Table 28.1–2]. There are approx. one dozen names that occur at several places: the same person at Shatial, Oshibat, Khanbari, or Dadam Das, another at Dadam Das and Ziyarat. These short "visitor inscriptions" with typical Central Asian personal names and patronymics reveal their eminent role in the international relations within the inter-Asian network of the Silk Roads and their involvement in Indian trade. The graffiti mostly reveal personal names of Sogdians, but also some of West Iranian origin, belonging to the Sasanian period (ca. 224–651 AD). Nearly all of these names are known from middle Persian inscriptions of the 3rd century, belonging to the Sasanian period (ca. 224–651 AD). Two of the Parthian inscriptions at Shatial can be dated more exactly to the pre-Sasanian time and were engraved most likely during the second half of the 3rd century (between 225 and 325 AD). The addition of geographical names refers to the provenance of the persons from Taškent and the environs of Samarkand. With the exception of Nanai-vandak, the most frequent name in the onomastics at Shatial is xown, the son of Varzakk, or *xown* the son of Nanai.[787] Some theophoric names are also known from Shatial, thus indicating the veneration of Zoroastrian and other Iranian deities. The name of the goddess Nanā(i) (Sogdian: *nny*), as known from the iconographic Sogdian pantheon as a young woman with four arms riding on a lion or sitting on a throne, is attested at Shatial (30:7, 36:63); it is popular also as component of personal names.[788] Another Sogdian god who occurs among the theophoric names is Waḫšu (Waḫuš), representing the river deity of the Oxus. He has his sanctuary at Tachti Sangin.[789] At Shatial Sogdian merchants supposedly erected a sanctuary as well, where "the spirits of this holy river were worshipped".[790] Noticeable is the absence of any Christian names, which could also explain the possible occurrence of Nestorian cross symbols.

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[783] Thalpan 268:2.3: Jettmar 1982a pl. 9; 1984a, 193–194 fig. 5; Jettmar 1997b, 516. Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 24. MANP 8, 2007, 78–79 pl. 2; 68 and IXc. – For prototypes in Indian rock art, see: shelter no. 10 of Adamgarh, Hoshangabad District, which shows 10 superimpositions, the latest from "historic period" and Satkunda, Raisen District, both in Bhopal Region: Pandey 1993, 56 pl. 71 and IV and 71 pl. 69. Bhimbetka: Brooks – Wakankar 1976, pl. 82–83.

[784] + Title added.

[785] Sims-Williams 1992 and 1996, 52–61; Sogdian inscriptions in Shatial: MANP 2, 1997, 57. 62–72.

[786] + Here HH added this note: "(D.B.16?)" [D.B. possibly = Ditte Bandini = MANP 11, 2013].

On the basis of the epigraphical evidence it is obvious that the Sogdians controlled both the trade between Sogdiana and India as well as between China and India. Compared with the great number of Sogdian inscriptions, those in Middle Persian, Parthian and Bactrian occur rather occasionally. Nicholas Sims-Williams therefore suggested "that the Sogdians may have had an effective monopoly of the trade on both routes".[791]

The westernmost site at Shatial on the southern bank of the Upper Indus seems to have functioned as a trade centre for the Sogdians. The strategical position at an important river crossing or bridge leading from the Darel basin into the Indus Valley predestined the place as a traffic junction, which is safeguarded by a small fortress. The foreign trader caravans came from the northwest, that is, from the Sogdiana via the valleys of Tangir or Darel, but also from their trading centres in Xinjiang using the Hunza route. At this transit station the Sogdian merchants met their counterparts in the region and South Asia, as inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī and Proto-Śāradā demonstrate. From there, the foreign merchants with their caravans were not allowed to enter farther into the Indus Valley and to reach Kashmir or to Hazara and the lowlands of Gandhara via the main route from Chilas across the Babusar Pass. Until now the Indian inscriptions have revealed only two definite names of merchants or the name Śri Viṭa – a caravan leader (*sarthavaha*, Shatial 39:23), and only one name whose origin is clearly specified. Just opposite Chilas, above the landing-stage at Thakot "the merchant Lonamka from Śri-Pratapadityapura" has perpetuated his name.[792] Interestingly, the site called Pratāpapura was founded by king Pratāpāditya II Durlabhaka (ca. 636–686), son of Durlabhavardhana (600–636), after the middle of the 7th century. This place, which rivalled the city of Indra in splendour, is located at the village of Tāpar near Srinagar.[793]

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[787] + Here HH added this note: "*(dazu Vaissière 81)*" [= Vaissière 2005, 81].

[788] See also Mode 2003, 152–157.

[789] Mode 2003, 164–166.

[790] Sims-Williams. Mode 2003, 173.

[791] Sims-Williams 1996, 56.

[792] The interpretation is owed to O. von Hinüber.

[793] After Kalhaṇa's chronicle *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of the 12th century: Ray 1970, 22–23, 44–45.

7.8 *Chinese, Inner Asians et al.*[794]

The occurrence of other foreign names in these inscriptions indicates the presence of Hephthalites, i.e. the Huns, and Turks, since many noble families were of this origin. The nomadic Hephthalites had dominated an area covering Tokharistan from the Amu Darya to Northwest India, where between 477 and 507 they subjugated also Chitral and Gandhara, reigned by the Kidāra Kuṣāṇa, who also originated from Tokharistan.[795] The Hephthalite hegemony also extended farther to the east into Wakhan and Gilgit. According to Chinese sources in the Zhoushou, the Suichu and Beishi a new nomadic power emerged in the Northern Asiatic steppe, which threatened the Hephthalite supremacy in the region south of the Amu Darya (Oxus) River. A first Turkic invasion into Hephthalite territory took place in 555 AD.

Two standing male figures and a smaller kneeling person at Dadam Das (48:A) [Table 27.1] are depicted in a singular banquet scene, which could testify the presence of Hephtalites in this part of the Upper Indus region. Two persons with a lotus flower in the left hand and a drinking cup in the right are served by the smaller man, who kneels before them holding a wineskin, apparently a person of lower rank. The figure on the right wears a diadem, which is decorated by a crescent, and an earring. The other man is drawn in the same posture, but does not show any status symbols. His head has a special feature, which is connected with a Hunnic habit: the lofty conical dome and flattened vertical occiput. The far-reaching international connections are indicated by a series of Chinese inscriptions, engraved by merchants, pilgrims and even by an envoy of the Great Wei named Gu Wei-long, as documented by a graffito of 12 characters at Haldeikish in the Hunza Valley.[796] Ma Yong translated them as "Wei-long, envoy of Great Wei (is) now dispatched to Mi-mi" (see Deeg 101) [Table 30.1]. Mi-mi, a Central Asian state, is located in the north of the middle Syr Darya at the road from Samarkand to Kashgar (Shu-le).[797] Other Chinese inscriptions at the 'eastern gate' to the Chilas Basin contain names of travellers [Table 30.2]. The Chinese family name *Zhang* occurs four times, other names such as *Kao* only one time. They and other graffiti engraved at Shatial indicate that this route, which might be identical with the 'Ji-bin Route' after Ma Yong, was used by Chinese coming along the southern branch of the Silk Route after the Han Dynasty and mainly during the T'ang Dynasty (618–906 AD).[798]

An exceptional inscription in Hebrew at Gichi, the former campsite, was also made by two merchants, Benjamin, son of Samuel, and Josef, son of 'El'azar, who travelled in the Indus

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[794] + Title added. On the topic see Bakker 2020.

[795] Kuwayama 1989.

[796] For the reading and interpretation of the Haldeikish inscription, see: Yong 1986 [repr. 1989], Höllmann 1993 and 1996. For the other Chinese graffiti at Shatial, Chilas-Jayachand, Thak Gah and Thalpan, see: Höllmann 1993, 99. Thalpan: MANP 9, 2009, nos 451:1, 755.

[797] For the localization of Mi-mi state, see: Sverchkov 2009.

[798] Yong 1986 [repr. 1989], 141. Mentioned by Dani 1983a, 52 no. 39 and Jettmar 1985b. – Thalpan (3), Thak Gah (1), Chilas (3), Shatial (2): Höllmann 1993, 63–69. Thalpan: MANP 9, 2009, no. 451:1, 755.

Valley during the 9th century.[799] The eminent role of Jewish merchants in the long-distance trade along the Silk Road is also evident in Turfan-texts. Even during the Islamic period Hebrews were welcomed in Kashmir in contrast to other foreign merchants, who were suspected as spies, as the Arab chronicler al-Bīrūnī recorded in the 11th century.[800] Tibetan inscriptions are frequent in Ladakh, while some were also recorded in Baltistan at the Buddhist mountain sanctuary of Shigar, on the Buddha rock at Manthal [Table 34], as far as at Alam Bridge at the confluence of the Indus and Gilgit rivers. They thus are indicative of the Tibetan expansion from Baltistan to the Gilgit region during the 8th century AD. Tibetan inscriptions along with the characteristic stupa images of the 'cruciform type' at the southern side of the Darkot Pass, at the Gilgit River in Punial as well as the Buddha relief of Naupura reveal the other direction from where Little Palur came under the Tibetan sovereignty.

8 Times of Change: Battle-Axe Warriors. Anti-Buddhist Movement [Tables 31.1–32.2]

The important late group of petroglyphs reflects a completely new ethnic element along the Indus River Valley, which appeared during and after the 9th to 10th century from the Upper Indus in Hodar, around Chilas, in an increasing number of sites between Ba Das East, and Mostar Nala and Ges, Alam Bridge, around Gilgit as far as into the side valleys of the Gilgit River.[801] During this period carvings representing a primitive form of stupa were still common, whereas the canonical representations of the stupa with the *aṇḍa*, which contains the relics of Buddha, are seldom. The stupas display a more tower-like contour, whose sacred character is indicated by the fact that they end in a *sikhara* (spire) and are crowned by a trident finial. These mostly abstract depictions of the ancient stupa, also called "stūpa-derivates", "*mchod-rten* of Tibetan type", or mere "mountain symbols", are sometimes careless in execution, such as in larger quantities in Domu Das, and they do not show inscriptions of their donators. Dani saw in the new architectural feature "the development of a temple type on the basis of the older form of terraced stūpas", which was introduced by Brahmins.[802] He followed Biddulph, who claimed that "Buddhism was no doubt the religion of the country at the time of the Shin invasion" and there are "good grounds that the religion of the Shins was of the Brahminical type".[803] Before the arrival of Islam there seems to have existed a "Brahmanical", i.e. Hinduist intermezzo, which was later seen as a Hinduist renaissance running contemporaneously with the decline of the Buddhism. This radical change in style obviously indicates that Buddhism had lost its prominent position and may also reflect the altered political and ethnic context during this period. It is the period when Buddhism was also in decline in Gandhara and Swat, where monasteries were deserted.[804] Works of continued Buddhist character are supplemented with hands and feet or even damaged by rougher schematic carvings. Battle scenes with horsemen and warriors carved in an "anti-iconic" mode with simple lines and a circle clearly demonstrate the troubled situation in the valley, indicating a hostile attitude towards Buddhist symbols.[805] The dramatic scenes reveal stupas of the Tibetan type with their defenders on retreat, who have been attacked by the adherents of a solar deity with swords and battle-axes of the Kafir type.[806] Their main symbols are a variety of battle axes and disc wheels or sun rosettes.[807] The battle axes depicted in rock carvings display two different types.[808] In Hodar only 18 isolated examples of this characteristic weapon have been noted, besides 10 axes which are held by warriors or horsemen.[809] Conspicuously, there are no axes depicted in the most western site of the Upper Indus at Shatial. Their dominant role in rock carving sites around Chilas clearly reveal the axe as a symbol of the ethnic group ruling the region between Hodar and Alam Bridge. Some of the altogether 30 depicted axes show as a significant feature dots around the blade, which may suggest a toothed edge or drops of blood from the defeated enemy.[810]

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[799] This inscription (MANP 4, 2001, no. 155:4) in Oriental-Hebrew was found in 1982: Jettmar 1987b, 1994, 166.

[800] Sachau 1888. Said 1989.

[801] Dani 1983a, 185–204; Jettmar 1984a; 1985, 765–773; 1996a, 88–89; 1997a, 58–63: 2002, 106–109. Jettmar-Thewalt 1987, 25–27 pl. 24; Bandini-König – Bemmann – Hauptmann 1997, 46–47. Ghizer: Hallier 1991, 14 fig. 32. Hunza: Jettmar 1984a, 180–181 figs 1–2.

[802] Dani 1983a, 229 and 1995, 35.

The motif of the mounted horseman, especially showing a warrior standing on the horse with triumphantly raised sword, sword and shield, battle axe and bow, or shield and flag apparently express a victorious gesture. Sometimes the feet of the rider are visible underneath the horse's belly. It has been suggested that he has risen standing in the stirrups, which would prove the use of stirrups.[811] The feature is widespread in the rock carvings in Bajaur and Swat, but not in the same dominating pose as along the Upper Indus.[812] The characteristic motif has been explained as a heraldic symbol that also occurs in other rock art provinces, such as in Loi Dan in Sindh showing warriors standing on the horse or camel's back. Yet, considering the isolated depiction of such a mounted warrior, a distinct dead hero or tribal chieftain could have been worshipped. This motif is connected with the characteristic image of horsemen on the so-called hero-stones, erected since the late Gupta period in Central India and in Sindh.[813] The worship of dead warriors, who were killed in a battle, as well as of satis, women who were widowed by the unnatural death by their husbands, found its pictorial expression by erecting the so-called hero and sati stones. The hero-stones are seen as memorials to the deceased, who are depicted on foot or riding on the back of a horse or camel, holding a sword and a shield, and equipped with bow, arrows, quiver and a dagger.

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[803] Biddulph 1880, 112–113. Also Jettmar 1984a, 184 adopted Biddulph's assumption of a Hinduist renaissance and a contemporaneous decline of Buddhism at the end of the 1st millennium [+ see also Tucci 1977].

[804] + On the potential climatic changes that may have caused such rapid decline, see Olivieri 2020.

[805] + See also the late mounted warriors carved over the 12th century CE inscription at the site of Talang in Swat (Olivieri – Vidale et al. 2006).

[806] + HH added "(Jettmar 1993a, XII)".

[807] Jettmar 1984a, 185–191. Hunza: Desio 1985, 237–238 pl. 3. Jettmar 1984a, 191–197. Gilgit: Snoy 1975, 224 fig. 111. Battle axes and "sun rosettes" at a site called Thangai north of Gilgit: Jettmar 1989b, 190 pl. 27b. A boulder with two "sun symbols" was recorded 3.6 km east of Shojal in the Gilgit Valley: Tsuchiya 1996, 31 photo 9.

[808] + Here HH added "Jettmar 1984a, 180–181 figs. 1–2".

[809] MANP 3, 1999, 54–57 pl. 61–62, warriors: no. 37:2, 37:4, 86:6, horsemen: 35:69, 81:1.

[810] Hodar [Hodur]: MANP 3, 1999, 56–57 fig. 41, 45 no. 81:1, 110:24. Vidale – Olivieri 2002, 198 footnote 14. Chilas: Jettmar 1984a, 186–187 fig. 1–2; Jettmar – Thewalt 1987, 26.

The most conspicuous pre-Islamic figural motif of the 9th and 10th centuries showing a warrior with shield and sword on a horse occurs occasionally also in the religious folk art of woodcarvings, which decorate as "pre-Muslim survivals" mosques, as for instance on the wooden pillar of the veranda at Kela Jumaat in Seo in Indus Kohistan.[814] Similar Buddhist or other pre-Islamic figurative traditions, common in the rock art along the Upper Indus, are wheel-like discs, vases, flowers and birds. In addition, the motif recalling a labyrinth is engraved on the outside of mosques or carved on several pillars of the prayer hall in a region extending from Chitral, Tangir-Darel to the Indus Valley. The motif of the Buddhist *chaitya*-hall, the double arches, is also included in the later decoration systems. The motifs reflect both a pre-Islamic tradition dating back to the first millennium and provide evidence of the late conversion to Sunni Islam in the mountain valleys during the course of the 18th century.[815]

Post-Buddhist imagery was thought by Jettmar to go back to the mighty and militant people of the Daradas during the 9th and 10th centuries. Their history is recorded in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, the chronicle of the kings of Kashmir. The Daradas were a threat to the kingdom of the Śāhi of Waihand. In the 11th and 12th centuries their powerful rulers even attacked.[816] Dani associated this enigmatic change in the rupestrian art with the appearance of the Shina-speaking battle-axe people. He thus adopted Biddulph's earlier suggestion of "the movement of the Shins northward, which may have happened about the time of, and was possibly occasioned by, the irruption of the Mahommedans into India". But, "the northward impulse appears to have been given to them under somewhat different conditions, and at a considerably earlier period than it was imparted to cognate tribes in other valleys". "Their religion was a form of Hindooism, and not of Buddhism",[817] and beyond any doubt also not of Islam.

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[811] Thewalt 1984, 215 fig. 15. [+ regarding horsemanship gears and stirrups, see here Olivieri 2015a, 77–79].

[812] Alinga: Rehman 1997, 29–30 pl. Ia, 32–33 pl. 6b–9b.

[813] Settar – Sontheimer 1982. Sindh: Kalhoro 2010, 2011. [+ HH left some notes mentioning among the contributions published in Settar – Sontheimer 1982, Doshi 1982 and Jain 1982].

[814] Dani 1989, 90 pl. IIIb (printed upside-down). Jettmar 1985c, 104–105 and 1992, 34–35 fig. g–h with drawings of the pillar's capital. Klimburg 1997, 153.

[815] Frembgen 1999, 83–84.

[816] Stein 1900. (Book VII: 167–176, 375, 1171–1195; VIII: 209–211, 614, 2454, 2709, 2764–2765, 2771, 2775, 2842–2897). [+ HH added here: "Kashmir (Jettmar 1985b: Biruni)"].

The invaders introduced a new form of horse-riding and used especially the new type of composite bows, long battle axes, a curved sword and a round shield. The distinct composite bow with curved tips and double bend, the *τόξον Σκυθικόν*, which since the Cimmerian and Saka-Scythian period was the most effective and favourite weapon in the Eurasian steppes, apparently was now common in the Upper Indus region. Its strength came from laminating together three different materials, horn or bone on the inside facing the archer, wood in the middle, and sinew on the outside, all bound together with animal glue.[818] This type of bow also had a long tradition in Iran, where skill in archery was seen as one of the important skills along with horsemanship for game and battle. Achaemenid reliefs show both types of the bow used by the Persian army: the simple oriental form is carried by warriors in Elamite costume and also by the royal guards, while the composite bow by contrast does not occur separately and seems to be inserted in the *gorytos.* Rock carvings of perhaps Medieval time at Salimabad near Pingal in the Ghizer Valley show hunting and lively arranged battle scenes with riders turned backwards on horseback and shooting arrows with these distinctive composite bows.[819] These horsemen impressively reveal the fighting technique known from the warriors of the Eurasian steppe.

The battle axe, solar discs and mounted hero figures are their most significant "warrior-ceremonial" symbols.[820] Jettmar described the transformation as a process of expansion from the homeland of the Shins, "the Dārada Empire", which "had conquered the Gilgit Valley during the second half of the first millennium AD, in the course of which the carriers of the Burushaski language were either assimilated or pushed back into the valleys of Hunza and Yasin, where they also came under the rule of Dardic dynasties".[821]

The discs with manifold interior decorations and sometimes with a serrated outline have been interpreted as mere shield signs and more convincingly as solar or astral symbols.[822] They could also render clan symbols, as still found in the ornamentation of vernacular architecture in Kohistan or on local dress.[823]

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[817] Biddulph 1880, 160–161.

[818] For a comprehensive description of different bow types, see: Khorasani 2006, 286–297.

[819] Shamran Valley (Ghizer): Desio 1985, 244 pl. 14b.

[820] Dani 1983a, 185–231. The typical battle-axe motif as an important symbol of power has survived in the local tradition as seen on the abacus of a wooden pillar at the Pattan mosque in Indus Kohistan, Dani 1989, 93 pl. 40b.

[821] Jettmar 1975, 20–21.

[822] Warriors with axes and decorated shields: MANP 8, 2007, 39 pl. 2, no. 225:1, 97 pl. 3, no. 300:2, 128 pl. 3, no. 356:2.

As most significant motif, after the horn symbol, the circular *keṛa* seems to be a warrior's symbol in the architectural wooden decoration of the so-called last heroic phases of former Kafiristan, now Nuristan, the "Land of Light", in northeastern Afghanistan.[824] The *keṛa* as a popular decorative motif gained importance in the Late and Latest Kafir periods (i.e. from the second third of the 19th century to Islamization in 1896) of the Wama and Ashkungal regions, where it sometimes covered the entire facade of houses in different configurations. It was apparently "an emblem of the sun, symbolizing energy, heaven and perfection".

The battle axe represents the other characteristic emblem, which stimulated Dani to designate the conquerors as "battle-axe people". The singular image of a warrior at Ba Das East (47:8) shows apparently a chieftain in a chain or scale armour and a helmet with raised battle axe. This distinct type of a weapon was widely used until the beginning of the last century as a ceremonial axe and a status symbol in the mountain valleys from the legendary Kafir Kalasha (Kalaṣa) in Chitral to the tribes of East Baltistan.[825] These axes apparently were also used in shamanistic procedures. For the Dayals of the Broqpa in Baltistan they were signs of their mission as shamans, which they had received during their sessions from their tutelary fairies, the Rachis.[826] Ceremonial axes with an upward curved, serrated blade are sometimes carved with representations of stupas, thus displaying the destruction of the Buddhist buildings.[827] The Dardic ruler in the so-called royal drinking scene in the murals of 'Du-khang, the assembly hall, at Alchi Monastery in the Western Himalayas holds the same weapon as a sign of his power in his right hand. The magnificent miniature shows the seated ruler wearing a Central Asian or Sasanian style robe, which is decorated with the characteristic heraldic motif of lions in roundels.[828] Assembled above and below the scene are members of his princely retinue; one of them offers a cup of wine. The royal assembly is reminiscent of court scenes known from early Buddhist rock images at Chilas. The 'Du-khang miniature has been described as a masterpiece of a Tibetan artist dating to the 11th century, but portraying "his royal master within the context of the grandeur of former (Tibetan?) great kings". Its style is clearly different from the art of historical northwest India.

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[823] Trevelyan 1987, fig. 19 showing "vulture dance in Gilgit". For discs in vernacular architecture, see: Akhtar 1997, 40–45, 99, 104, 125 pl. 1–8, 116 pl. 21, 163 pl. 22, esp. 164 pl. 23.

[824] Klimburg 1999, 224–226, 301 figs 57–76. For the geographical setting of Nuristan, see: p. 39–40 and for the periodic system of the Kafir styles, see p. 219–220.

[825] Biddulph 1880, 91 with figs 1–8. About the *washlik*, ceremonial battle axes, swung during dances over the head by "great Kafir men" in Nuristan: Edelberg – Jones 1979, fig. 14, 1–2. See also: Jettmar 1984a, 186–191 fig. 3. Klimburg 1999, 216–217 pls 809–811. Ancestor figures of big men can wear various martial attributes such as shield, spear, and ceremonial battle axe (op. cit. 308 fig. 123). But, the most characteristic weapon as symbol of manhood of the Kafir Kalasha was the dagger, called *katara*, real masterpieces of metalworking.

[826] Jettmar 1957, 25–26.

[827] Chilas II: Jettmar 1980c, 200 fig. 12.

[828] Snellgrove – Skorupski 1977, 31–32 pl. 18. For better photos, see: Pal 1982, 25–28 pl. D23 (he saw in the image of the ruler a Dardic king, see also Jettmar 1984a, 215) and Goepper 1982, pl. 32.

The axe matches the other heraldic element, the roundels with a lion raising its paw, which embellish his robe and the shield of one of the attending warriors. The engraved heraldic animal appears in the Indus Valley not only at Khalatse in Ladakh, but also in sites around Hodar and Gukona (69:1), thus documenting the claim to power in this part of the valley by a clan or principality. The Dukhang murals were painted in ca. the mid-11th century. The mode of luxurious dress was part of the common regal attire in a region from Ladakh and the historical Northwest India to the court of Ghazni. Several princely donors on the slightly earlier Gilgit-bronzes are portrayed wearing similar costumes.[829]

The new anti-Buddhist ideology is manifested by the image in Hodar of a stupa with a human figure (added later) standing on its top, the *aṇḍa*. With its spread arms it may indicate the desecration of this Buddhist symbol, as in another stupa picture from Harban Das with added human feet on its basis.[830]

The new situation along the Upper Indus Valley, which also caused an unstable religious situation is characterized by scenes in Chilas IV of aggressively galloping horsemen with raised swords, who seem to attack or to jump over tower-like stupas.[831]

There are also battle scenes showing foreign warriors fighting with Buddhists and fights between defenders of a stupa and attacking sun-worshippers. Thus, the carvings seem to indicate a hostile anti-Buddhist movement of a new population, which in the past was not integrated into the Buddhist kingdoms.[832] A single combat at the mouth of Thak Nala shows a Buddhist under a tower-like stupa, who is attacked by a warrior with a solar-head. In a dramatic battle scene at Hodar on the left side a group of warriors defend a stupa, designed as a Tibetan mChod-rten. They are attacked by enemies whose leader – his head within a round disc designates him as a sun-worshipper – points to the Buddhist defenders. Jettmar described the commander of the attackers as a god. Aggressively galloping horsemen with raised swords seem to attack or to jump over tower-like stupas (Chilas IV). Analogous pictograms of mounted warriors and bowmen linked to crossed circles are known from rock art in the Swat Valley.[833] The same combination of these motifs is known as well from the site Zahargani Thal in the Gaj Valley of the Khirtar range, Dadu District of Sindh.[834] They obviously mark the same presence of a hostile attitude towards Buddhist symbols, thus representing the collision of different religious systems. These "non-believers" worshipping the cult of the sun seem to represent local mountain tribes, who lived in the upper part of the Indus Valley and in the higher mountain regions also around the Kaghan Valley. They infiltrated the valleys and basins and transformed the cultural patterns of the whole region.

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[829] + HH added this quote: "Pal 1975, no. 30 und 31 (16/17)".

[830] Hodar [Hodur]: MANP 3, 1999, no. 35: 96–97 pl. 102. See also Vidale – Olivieri 2002, 198 fig. 15, with an interpretation of the dots on both sides of the figure.

[831] + HH here added this note: "Thewalt 1984, 214–216 figs. 13–14".

[832] Jettmar 1997a, 61–62 fig. 1.10 and 2.

[833] Olivieri 2008, 17, 25–26 figs 6; 11.

[834] Loi Dan: Kalhoro 2012, 213 fig. 29, Zahargani Thal: personal communication by Kalhoro.

The worship of the sun, which was an essential part in the spiritual life of the mountain tribes, seems to go back even to the period of the Hephthalite or Chionite intrusion. Jettmar discussed different solutions for the new "heliocentric period in the mountain religion".[835] The Persian geography *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* of 982 AD delivers scanty information about a king, the Bulūrīn Shāh, "in the vast country" Bolor (Bulūr), who called himself "Son of the Sun", and who "does not rise from his sleep until the Sun has risen".[836] As befits a well-behaved son, he cannot rise before his father.

The enigmatic round discs might be connected with cult performances in North-West India, where the sun god was symbolized by "a wheel, by a lotus of 8 or 12 petals, and by a round disk. Such symbols were placed on the altar and worshiped, as e.g. in Sátapatha Brāhmaṇa VII, 4,1,10, where a golden disk represents the sun."[837]

Sun-worship in Kashmir had a centuries-old tradition. Especially in view of the intense relations between the country famed for its legendary wealth and the Upper Indus region, it is indeed worthwhile to throw a short glance at the different early religions in ancient Kashmir, prior to the time before Muslim conquerors under the adventurer Shāh Mirzā invaded the valley in 1339 and brought Buddhist and Hindu art to an abrupt end. The "law of Buddha" according to the record of Xuanzang and other sources seems to have been introduced as early as the 3rd century BC by the *arhat* Madhyāntika in "the fiftieth year after the Nirvāṇa" (Majjhantika after a Ceylonese chronicle).[838] The most important chronicle in poetic narration about Indic and Kashmir historiography, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, was written in about 1148 by Kalhaṇa, son of the Brahman Champaka, a minister to King Harṣa (1089–1101) of the first Lohara Dynasty.[839] The historiographer describes in detail the history of Kashmir up to the time of the chronicle's edition, from the time of King Aśoka to the middle of the 12th century with references to the construction of towns and temples designating their donators.[840] It is a reliable source for the period of his life and the preceding periods including the Karkota Dynasty, for which contemporary documents were available for the author. According to these sources the valley of Kashmir was part of the Mauryan Empire of the great King Aśoka (i.e. King Priyadarsi in his edict on a pillar at Sirkap in Taxila, the only Aramaic inscription in Pakistan), who became emperor of Gandhara in 274 BC and who adopted Buddhism in 262 BC He also founded Kashmir's capital Śrinagara, which today is Pāndreṭhan, south of Srinagar. As emphatic promotor of the new religion he built numerous stupas there, four of which still existed during Xuanzang's two-year visit beginning in the year 631 AD, when the country was ruled by the Karkoṭa Dynasty (ca. 600 to 855).[841] Xuanzang saw in Kia-shi-mi-lo, the country "which was once a dragon lake", one hundred *saṅghārāmas* (monasteries) with 5000 Buddhist priests and the stupas, each of which preserved relics of Tathāgata, the 'Thus-Gone One' (one, who has arrived at perfect knowledge, a Buddha).[842] Buddhism flourished in the vale under the patronage of the great king of the Kuṣāṇa Dynasty Kaṇiṣka I (ca. 127–150 AD) and his three successors Huviṣka, Vasudeva I and Kaṇiṣka II, who ruled his empire until 246 AD. That it was a great centre of the belief is revealed by the performance of the fourth Buddhist council under the auspices of Kaṇiṣka I. By the 2nd century AD Kashmir played a dominant role in the spread of the religion to North and Central Asia, China and Tibet. The impact of Kashmiri art as a source of imagery is apparent in Central Asia, in the painted caves of Kizil and Dunhuang, and in Buddhist rock art along the Upper Indus. The most elaborate testimonies of Kashmiri influence in Bolor are the known Kashmiri or Gilgit bronzes, unique metalwork produced in specialized manufactures for the court of the Palola Ṣāhi Dynasty. This golden age of Kashmiri Buddhism is also testified by abundant evidence of 300 *vihāras* (monasteries) with innumerable stupas and *caityas* (sacral places) and sacral images, which were seen by the Chinese pilgrim Wukong, who went to Kashmir in 759 AD for the study of Sanskrit and Buddhist doctrine. But, after the end of the Karkoṭa Dynasty in the 7th and 8th century the predominance of Buddhism was ousted by the growing worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu and other Brahminical gods of the Hindu pantheon. Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in Kashmir arose during the reign of the Karkoṭa Dynasty and their predominance against Buddhism under the succeeding rulers of the Utpala Dynasty (ca. 855–939. Avantivarman became the first king, 855/56–883), as is again recorded in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī.*[843] The Kashmiri pantheon of the Hindu religion included also many other minor gods and goddesses. The sun-worship became also popular, as the cult of the sun-god Jayasvāmin and of the deity of sun Sūrya, whose cult may have been introduced centuries ago by the Sakas and Kuṣāṇas. A sect called Śammáses performing sun-worship in the temple of Mārtaṇḍa, which according to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* was erected by the great king Lalitāditya (ca. 699–736) and dedicated to the cult of Sūrya, survived in Kashmir until the 16th century.[844]

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[835] Jettmar 1997a.

[836] Minorsky 1937, 121. Jettmar 1984a, 207; 2002, 141. 2009, 68, 86. Deeg 2005, 110 footnote 494 assumes that the genealogy of the Bulūrīn Shāh[s] (*sūryaputra*, 'son of the sun') could have been a relic of the Indian royal ideology.

[837] + Here HH added this: "(Stietencron 1966, 22)".

[838] Watters 1904–1905, 261–262. Ray 1970, 158–168.

[839] Kalhaṇa regarded himself as a poet, who claimed to have published the chronicle as a didactic poem in order to educate his countrymen. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* was translated and edited with a commentary by Stein 1900.

[840] The development of the Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture of Kashmir is described by Huntington 1985, 354–385.

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[841] The much-disputed chronology of the Karkota Dynasty, which began with King Durlabhavardhana (600–636 and ended with Utpalāpīḍa (835–855) follows the chronological order of the kings as given by the great poet historian Kalhaṇa. (Summarized by Ray 1970, 55 and Khosa 1984, 14). Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa, who reigned for 36 years, is the only remarkable ruler of the dynasty. As great conqueror he apparently raided rather than expanded in Hindustan and Himalayan countries. In the second quarter of the 8th century he fought against the growing power of the Tibetans in allegiance with the Chinese Empire.

[842] Beal 1884, I 148–168. Watters 1904–1905, 261.

[843] For a comprehensive overview of the Hindu beliefs Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in Kashmir, see Ray 1970, 168–181 with references.

The centre of heliolatry in South Asia was Multān in Sindh,[845] which was described by Xuanzang, as follows: "There is a temple dedicated to the sun, very magnificent and profusely decorated. The image of the Sun-dêva is cast in yellow gold and ornamented with rare gems" (Mūlasthāna). After Bīrūnī the gold image of Multān was called with the other name of the sun-god, Āditya. According to Jettmar, after the Arab conquest of Sindh and the removal of the gold image the adherents of the sun-worshippers, the Saura, escaped to the mountain valleys in the north and spread their beliefs in former Buddhist territories.[846]

The "Medieval Warm Period", which transformed the climate in Western Central Asia between 800 and 1000 AD, may also have compelled the nomadic livestock owners to leave their pastures in the higher mountains and to infiltrate into the lower fertile basins along the Indus and its tributaries.[847] Radical devastation of the original vegetation caused by human activities around Little Palur, i.e. the Gilgit Basin, was described by the Korean pilgrim Hye Ch'o (Huei Ch'ao), who travelled between 723 and 729 through the northern periphery of Gandhara and Kashmir.[848] On the mountains there he saw only burnt tree stumps, reminders of the dramatic alteration of the former well-balanced environment, thus deteriorating the living space of the population. Such climatical and environmental transformations in the mountain region may have also had an effect on movements of ethnic groups from devastated areas into the river valleys, where survival was secured by a more favourable environment. Armed conflicts, such as the fight for hegemony in Little Palur between the Chinese and Tibetan great powers during the 8th century had also affected normal agriculture and secure irrigation. The changed political situation during the second half of the 10th century is reflected by the "Saka Itinerary", where in contrast to Punial and Gilgit no longer Buddhist monasteries are recorded at Śīlathasa, i.e. Chilas.[849] This place was one of the centers of a larger state comprising Bolor and Daraddesha. With the end of literate civilization, the ancient caravan route from north to south was no longer ventured along the Upper Indus.[850] The disappearance of Buddhism in this region including Kashmir coincides with the report of Alberuni, when he arrived there in the wake of the expansion of the Ghaznavi Turki kingdom. In his *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind (Kitāb taḥqīq mā li-l-Hind)* he refers only to Hindus, the new ethnic term to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslim local population.

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[844] For a description of the temple of Mārtand, one of the earliest and largest stone temples in Kashmir, see: Huntington 1985, 357–360; Kak 2000, 131–135 pl. 53 and 73.

[845] Maclean 1989, 18–24. Jettmar 1997a, 62–63.

[846] + HH here added this quote: "(Jettmar-Maclean)" [= Maclean 1989 is quoted in Jettmar 2008: 68].

[847] Esper – Schweingruber – Winiger 2002.

[848] Fuchs 1939, 20–22. Yand – Jan – Iida – Preston 1984, 47–48. Jettmar 1999[a], 387.

[849] Bailey 1936 and 1968.

[850] + Here HH added "(Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 30)".

9 Renaissance of Buddhism in Gilgit and Baltistan

9.1 The Buddha reliefs of Gilgit [Table 33.1–2]

During the 9th and the 10th century AD, Buddhism seems to have recovered or even survived in some parts of the Upper Indus Valley, in Punial and around Gilgit, as becomes evident from the only literary testimony from the second half of the 10th century, the aforementioned "Saka Itinerary". Both at *Baubura* (Bubur) and in "the great city *Gidagitti*" (Gilgit) Buddhist monasteries were still existent. Archaeological proof that there – contrary to the lower part of the Upper Indus Valley – Buddha was still venerated are carvings of the latest group of stupas. But "it was the flickering of a dying lamp",[851] after the invading Islam with all its might began to penetrate into the mountain regions. By contrast, in Baltistan with its historical connections to Purig and Ladakh there seems to have been no interruption in the Buddhist tradition. The faith flourished between 700 and 1300 in neighbouring Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and to a lesser extent in Orissa. From the 13th century onwards most of Northern India was occupied by Muslim dynasties.[852] The existence of six principalities during the 18th century in Baltistan may also reflect the political situation of the pre-Islamic period: Khaplu, Kharmang and the small princedom of Kiris in the east, Shigar and Rondu in the north, and the dominating kingdom of Skardu in the centre of the plain.

The rock reliefs of Gilgit and Baltistan exhibit besides isolated figures of Bodhisattvas and Buddhas also groups of figures, such as the pattern of the triad with the Buddha seated between two standing Bodhisattvas. The famous Buddha reliefs from Naupura near Gilgit and from Manthal on the ancient route towards the Deosai Plateau near Skardu in Baltistan represent the late phase of the "Golden Era of Buddhism", dating between the 8th and 10th century.[853] In contrast to the rupestral art of the Diamer District, the Buddha image is never portrayed in the rock carving sites, neither around Gilgit nor in Baltistan. The visibility of the sacral image for an approaching traveller could be heightened by the use of colour, even though no clear traces of painting are preserved on the known rock reliefs.

The relief at Naupura near the site of a Buddhist monastery some seven kilometres west of Gilgit is carved in the vertical front of a rock ca. 10 m above the entrance to the Kar Gah

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[851] Dar 1988, 47.

[852] + The sentence was left incomplete by HH.

[853] See also footnotes 186 (for early references to the Naupura-Buddha) and 179 (to the Manthal-Buddha). Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1429; Dani 1995, 82; 2001, 33.153 pl. 14–15; Klimburg-Salter (ed.) 1982, 21 fig. 4; Jettmar 2002, 131–132. Another meanwhile destroyed rock relief at Barmas near Dumot in the Sai Valley has been described as showing a sitting Buddha surrounded by his disciples by Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110, Dani 1983a, 233–234 and Jettmar 1984a, 214, 1993, 95 and 2002, 87.135. The boulder, at that time built in a wall. A a photo in the Heidelberg archive indicates only a crude human figure. During a visit in 2009 the original finding place of the boulder was still known to the villagers.

[Table 33.1]. The position of the monument marks also the entrance to one of the important routes from Gilgit into the narrow Kar Valley, and after traversing the Chonchar Pass (4415 m) into the Darel Valley thus reaching the lower part of the Upper Indus gorge. The figure of a standing Buddha in Tibetan style with raised right arm and the open palm of the hand at his chest facing the viewer apparently displays the *abhaya mudrā*, 'the gesture of assuring safety or fearlessness' (Jettmar), not the *vitarka mudrā*, "the gesture of discourse or discussion" (according to Dani). The left hand grasps the hem of his monastic robe. The image is about three metres high and carved within a shallow trefoil arch. Originally it was protected within a wooden pentagonal canopy, which was inserted into a groove and fixed by 13 square sockets cut into the rock.[854]

The Buddha figure was first mentioned in Siyar's Shah-nama and by Vigne, and described by Biddulph and Stein. The relief was dated by the Anglo-Hungarian explorer to the late 8th century, and by Dani and Jettmar to the 8th century or to the period "when Little Palūr was under Tibetan sovereignty".[855] Dar tried to identify the figure as Chamba, the Tibetan Boddhisatva Maitreya, and dated it to the late 7th or early 8th century.[856] Both in the way of representation and style it does not stand in the tradition of Gandharan art. The broad, fleshy face clearly renders Central Asian aesthetics. The figure displays apparent iconographic and stylistic features, which – following a disputed discussion – find their closest resemblance in the monumental rock-cut sculptures of Maitreya at Mulbek and Karchekar in the Suru Valley.[857]

The gigantic image of the ca. nine-metres high Mulbek figure is carved in the front of an isolated rock pinnacle situated on an ancient route leading from Leh in Ladakh to Srinagar, now on the highway between Leh and Kargil, ca. 40 km east of Kargil. Like the other rock-cut representations and reliefs of Buddha at Saling on the Shyok, Parkuta and Lamsah on the Indus, Manthal and Oltin above either sides of the Satpor Valley, and Naupura above the entrance to the Kar Gah, the monumental image of Mulbek must have marked a beacon for the traveller and pilgrim, which attracted them for rest or worship. The front side of the rock facing the road is almost entirely covered by the relief. The "figure of one of the Tibetan divinities, named Chamba" was for the first time noticed by Moorcroft during one of his pioneering excursions in the Trans-Himalayas, which led him 1822 from Leh to Dras. The deeply rounded and "rather full body with its fleshy appearance reveals ties" and "the attention to the abdominal and pectoral muscles, as are the high arching brows and full cheeks of the face", are standard for visible manneristic Kashmiri conventions and are dated to the 8th – 9th century.[858] The figure has been identified by the stupa in his crown. As in Saling he holds a water-bottle or rosary in his upper right hand of the four arms, a symbol which is normally combined with Avalokiteśvara. The other hands hold a bud and a prayer chain, and the fourth hand shows the gesture of granting wishes.[859] Whereas in the Mulbek figure the Buddha Maitreya or Chamba is carved in the four-armed version like the clay figures from the Sumtsek of Alchi, the 9-metre high Karchekar sculpture shows the two-armed image with the same hand-position, *mudrā*, like in another small figure at Dras, and at last in Naupura. The right arm is raised in front of the chest with its palm turned inward towards the body. The other more seven-meter-high image of Hambuting La shows the tri-coned crown, which is characteristic of the Karkota tradition in the Kashmir sculpture and some of the Baltistan reliefs, but also in the Gilgit-Kashmir bronzes.[860] The high relief images (and stelae) at Mulbek, Khartse and Hambuting La in Ladakh clearly form a singular group, which is to be distinguished from the reliefs in Kargah and Bubur.[861]

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[854] Strikingly there is no evidence for such shelters for the Buddhist rock sculptures of Swat: Filigenzi 2015, 55 (see also fig. 15 showing the Naupura Buddha).

[855] Biddulph 1880, 108–112 with fig. page 108–109 and Stein 1907, 15–16 fig. 1 (second half of the 8th century). A photo of the Buddha-rock is published by Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33. Drawing of the relief: Jettmar 1975, 198 fig. 2; 2002, 133. 138. 162. Dani 1995, 78 with fig.; 2001, 33. 153 pl. 15. Dar 1984; 1985; 1988, 39 fig. 9; 2006, 186, 222–223 fig. 89. Denwood 2007, 52 proposes also a date for both the reliefs of Bubur and Kar Gah "to the 8th – 9th centuries under Tibetan rule". Twist 2011, 97–98 fig. A.29 refers to "the flat form and rounded features used to represent the Buddha" of Naupura which "are very similar to the Buddhas" on the monolith from Bubur in Punyal (figs XX) and therefore can be possibly tied to "the patronage of the Paṭola Śāhis".

[856] Dar 1984, 84.

[857] Moorcroft – Trebeck 1841, II 18. Drew 1875. Knight 1893, 50 with photo p. 49. Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, 78 pl. 18, 1. Fontein 1979. Dar 1984, 35–37 fig. 2. Photos by O. Honigmann 1911: Appel 2010, 14 pl. 19 and by the De Filippi-expedition 1913–14: Mancini 2002, 222 fig. Francke 1907b, 98 saw "a striking similarity" between the Naupura and Manthal reliefs and the relief images at Dras and Sheh. See also the compilation of the rock sculptures in Ladakh by Dorjay 2010.

The carved monolith with an originally triangular base was found by Jettmar in 1979 on a field near Bubur in Punyal [Table 33.2].[862] The boulder shows relief images of Buddha on three of the four sides. Two facets depict in life-size the standing Śākyamumi, which resemble in style and monastic clothing that of the figure in the Naupura relief. On the lower part of one standing Buddha two smaller reliefs depict figures, the better preserved – of a seated man brandishing a sword above his head. Based on this pose, which reminded him of some Kashmir bronzes,[863] Jettmar suggests their identity as maybe a sitting Mañjuśrī, the personification of Transcendent Wisdom.[864] The third facet shows the seated Padmapāṇi wearing a three-pointed crown under a pointed arch and with his special symbol, the *padma* (lotus). The "Bearer of the Lotus" is named after an epithet used to describe a form of Avalokiteśvara. The same head-dress is worn by the Buddha figures, for example, on images of Vajrapāṇi in a rock carving near the Satpara road at Skardu, in reliefs at Dras, Shankar and Sheh near Leh, also at Choglamsar and Hambuting La in Ladakh.[865] Unfortunately, the hands of the Buddha are missing, but with his right arm he seems to perform the *varada* or the *bhūmiparśa mudrā*. Jettmar assigned the singular monolith with the three reliefs "to the very late phase of Buddhist monuments in this area", i.e. the 10th – 11th century, when Turkic tribes had entered the Upper Indus Valley.[866] He saw relations to the "image of a *devī*" on a large boulder found near Guligram in Swat.[867] The dancing devī there is obviously trampling under his feet a beheaded domestic goat. The scene could possibly interpreted as a local fertility ritual in a widely Buddhist environment. Tucci pointed to the 'almost complete absence of Vajrayāna deities', which corresponds with the imagery of the rock art along the Upper Indus. The Bubur reliefs by contrast would be an exception that reflects the further development of the Mahāyāna Buddhism, the "great conveyance" or "great vehicle".[868] The round faces of the standing Śākyamumi figures reminded Jettmar of the so-called *Balbal* figures, stone statues in human form representing an ancestor's cult of the Gök Turks of the Central Asian steppes and the Altai region, but a concrete relation between these monuments is not substantiated.[869]

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[858] Huntington 1985, 376 fig. 17.29 declares herself in favour of a date in 8th – 9th century. Snellgrove – Skorupski 1977, 1 fig. 7 propose a date to "the late Gupta period in India, namely the 7th century or even later". The rock sculptures of Mulbek and Karchekar and a statue near Dras showing Maitreya were described by Fontein 1979. The Mulbek "Chamba" was noticed by Moorcroft in 1820 (Travels II, 17), T. D. Forsyth in 1870 (Henderson – Hume 1873, 46 with a photo showing the whole Buddha image on the solitary rock); photo by O. Honigmann 1911: Apper 2010, 14 pl. 19, Francke 1914, 191–192; 1921, 145 with photo. For a photo of the Buddha rock at Mulbek, see: Weihreter 2010, 28–29 fig. 21–22. A short description of the Karchekar Buddha (9.14 m high) is presented by Shah 2012.

[859] + HH used the term "*Wunschgewährung*".

[860] Vohra 2005a, 34.

[861] + Here he added the reference to "(Denwood)" [= Denwood 2007, 2008, 2009].

[862] On the order of Prince Ali Ahmad Jan, then chief of the Gilgit police (SSP), the boulder was transported from Bubur to Gilgit. Jettmar 1984a, 214–215 plate III–IV; 1993b, 95; 1995, 47–49 fig. 1–4; 2002, 106, 134–135, 200–201 fig. 27, 1–3. Jettmar in contrast to Dani suggests a date in 10–11th century. Dani 2001, 168 pl. 17 proposes a perhaps more likely date in 8th century. See also: Dar 1984, 38 fig. 4. Twist 2011, 95–96 fig. 2.2–3 and A.24 with reference to the corpus of the Kashmir-Gilgit bronzes as connected with the Paṭola Śāhi Dynasty saw in the Bubur sculpture "a Paṭola Śāhi commission" and suggested a date of the 7th century. Her inconsistent assignment of the sculpture to

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this period is without a donor inscription as characteristic for the relevant Kashmir-Gilgit bronzes doubtful.

[863] von Schroeder 1981, pl. 19H and 20D.

[864] In contrast to Jettmar 1989b, 214 pl. IVa and 2002, 134, 200 fig. 27,1, who saw in the two small figures at the bottom of one standing Buddha a sitting Mañjuśrī, Twist 2011, 94 fig. 2.2–3 decided in favour of another suggestion regarding their identity as being donors.

[865] Dras, Sheh: Francke 1907, 52, 62 with photos. Snellgrove – Skorupski 1977, fig. 3 and 5. Ham 2010, 22 with photo. For the Maitreya of Hambuting La: Vohra 1988, 534 with fig. [+ see also Vohra 1995], Ham 2010, 22–23 with photo.

[866] Jettmar 1984a, 214–216; 1995, 47; 2002, 200–201.

[867] Tucci 1963b, 146–151 fig. 1–2. [+ On the Guligram stele, see the recent Srinivasan – Olivieri 2018].

[868] + Here HH left a sentence incomplete: "The Vajrayāna Buddhism …".

[869] Jettmar 1984a, 214. For ancient Turkic balbal figures in Central Asia, see: Belli 2003a and 2003b. The number of old Turkic statues, the *balbal* stones, in Russian Altai has been increased up to 300. For a general study see: Kubarev 1984; Kubarev – Kubarev 2013, 9 fig. 5–6; 54–69 fig. 61–66, 69–70.

Bubur apparently had political importance, for it is mentioned in the "Saka Itinerary" as "the city called Baubuera" (Baubura), where "is a great river called Sīna". It is also the site of four *saṃghārāma* (monasteries).[870] In the rock reliefs of Swat the figure of Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi holds the role of absolute (overwhelming) predominance. The isolated figures of this Bodhisattvas portray in the reliefs half of the other representations, and also within compositions of other divinities they occupy a central position.[871] In the art of the T'ang Period in East Turkestan the image of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was also the preferred Buddhist deity. No other appearance of Buddha was the subject of so many works of art.

The fragment of another Buddha relief, said to be found in Ghizer, is also private property of the late Ali Ahmad Jan's family.[872] The ca. 1 m-high figure shows the seated Buddha wearing a three-pointed crown, executed in the same position as the Padmapāṇi on the third facet of the Bubur monolith.

9.2 The Buddha reliefs of Baltistan

A first lively description of Po-lu-lo was delivered by the illustrious Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, whose equation with the Bolor of later writers and modern Baltistan has generally been accepted. His pejorative portrayal of the local population – "they are indeed an evil race" and "savage idolaters" – which was taken up by Marco Polo, reflects his apparently bad experiences during his visit there:[873]

> The country of Po-lu-lo is about 4000 li in circuit; it stands in the midst of the great Snowy Mountains. It is long from east to west, and narrow from north to south. It produces wheat and pulse, gold and silver. Thanks to the quantity of gold, the country is rich in supplies. The climate is continually cold. The people are rough and rude in character; there is little humanity or justice with them; and as for politeness, such a thing has not been heard of. They are coarse and despicable in appearance, and wear clothes made of wool. Their letters are like those of India, their language somewhat different. There are about a hundred *saṃghārāmas* (monasteries) in the country, with something like a thousand priests, who show no great zeal for learning, and are careless in their moral conduct. Leaving this country and returning to U-to-kia-han-ch (Uḍakhāṇḍa), (*to be identified with Ohind/Waihind on the Indus north of Thakot* [Besham]), we cross at the south the river

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[870] Bailey 1936, 261 [+ A further, albeit indirect, reference to the "Saka Itinerary" is Morgenstierne 1942].

[871] + Here a quote was added: "(Filigenzi 2012, 70)". See also Filigenzi 2015, 95–104, 151.

[872] Kind information by [Dr.] Muheezuddin Hakal, Gilgit. [+ Hakal 2022 for the present location and conditions of the Bubur reliefs A, B, and C].

[873] Beal 1884, I 135–136. See also Watters 1904–05, 239–240. For the description of Bolor by Yule 1903, 187.

> Sin-tu. The river is about 3 or 4 li in width, and flows south-west. […] After crossing the river we arrive at the kingdom of Ta-ch'a-shi-lo (Takshaśilā).

It has been doubted from Xuanzang's account that he actually visited Po-lu-lo, even though he describes his way to this country: "Proceeding east from Ta-li-lo across mountains and gullies going up the Indus, by flying bridges over precipices, a journey of above 500 li to the Po-lu-lo country". This account may have been derived from another pilgrim's account or by local information that he received at the royal site of Mungali (Mung-kie-li) in Uḍḍiyāna. The place was identified by Cunningham with modern Mingora in Lower Swat.[874]

The most outstanding Buddhist monument of the Karakorum is the Buddha rock of Manthal [Table 34], just at the mouth of the Satpor Valley near Skardu. The relief on a ca. six metre-high, huge granite boulder shows in masterly execution a meditating Buddha, seated in the yogic posture in a mandala which is formed by 20 smaller Buddhas depicted in the same posture. Buddha's right hand extends downwards, displaying the *bhumisparsha mudrā*, 'calling the earth to witness', which signifies the occasion of the Enlightenment. This most specific "earth-touching gesture" is also characteristic of images of Śākyamuni Buddha in his victory over the demon king Māra. The magnificent composition is flanked by two tall standing Bodhisattvas, on the left Padmapāṇi with the lotus in the hand, a form of Avalokiteśvara, and on the right Maitreya. Above the ample decorated canopy besides a small niche there is the carving of an *apsarās*, female sky-dwelling minor divinities and wives of the *gandharvas*, who are sometimes considered to be the musicians of the gods. The rest of another *apsarās* is engraved below. Originally there may have been three of them, but the left part above the canopy is destroyed. Underneath the scene is the image of a "*pūrṇaghaṭa*", the vase of plenty.

Small, seated figures of Buddha in meditation are found in the mandalas or edging the haloes of a larger main image showing Gandharan tradition. Such free-standing figures made of clay or stucco with a wooden enclosure existed in the shrines at Mingoi and other sites in the Tarim Basin.[875]

The southeastern face of the rock bears another engraved scene with a seated Buddha, portrayed as a teacher with his hands displaying the *vitarka mudrā*, the "gesture of teaching". On both sides the Buddha on the lotus throne is flanked by two colossal standing Bodhisattvas. The bas-relief was noticed by Lady Duncan,[876] but because the rock face is overgrown by lichen the details of the images can hardly be discerned. Early examples of the triads of

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[874] Watters 1904–05, 227, 239–240 with Xuanzang's travelogue. For the identification of Mungali or Mangala, see: Cunningham 1871, 82. [+ On the debate on the location of the ancient capital of Swat, whether it was Mingora or Manglawar, see Olivieri 2022a, Morgan – Olivieri 2022: 198–200].

[875] See the part of a vesica of carved and gilt wood from Mingoi near Karashahr and from other sites such as near Kucha in Xinjiang: Zwalf 1985, 196 fig. 281.

[876] Duncan 1906, 298.

Buddha, flanked by bodhisattvas are known from Gandhara and became more common in later Buddhist art.[877]

Three Tibetan inscriptions were engraved apparently later into the rock surface in three panels along the base of the central relief. The deeply carved letters are coloured with red pigment, as is usual in early Buddhist stone inscriptions of China. They resemble those of the Yarlung Dynasty in the region called Bod, the usual name for the central high plateau of Tibet.[878] The inscriptions have been dated by Francke "as old as those at Balu-mkhar, not later than A.D. 1000", and Philip Denwood assigns them to a period between 7th and 10th century.

The dynasty known from Chinese sources as Tŭbō or Tŭfān Dynasty had its origin before the 7th century in a side valley of Tsangpo River, the Yarlung River from where it had its name. The rise of the young kingdom to a powerful empire, which had to be recognised by neighbouring powers and even by the T'ang Dynasty of China, began with Khri sroṅч brtsan srong btsan sgam po (618–649), the 33rd in the Tibetan king's list.[879] The new kingdom is now known to the neighbours as Tibet, Tŭbō or Tŭfān (T'u-fan in Chinese transcription). Behind the Buddha rock is a stupa of the cubic type, carved on the face of a smaller boulder.[880] The incised lines of the carving show traces of colour like in stupa images at Saling.

Immediately opposite the Manthal rock in the Satpor Valley on the access to the route leading to the Deosai Plateau, another erratic boulder exposing a Buddhist image was found by Giotto Dainelli, a member of the De Filippi expedition in 1913–1914, near the village of Olting. According to the photograph, the scene on "a flat surface of 8 feet across" is not executed in low relief like the main image at Manthal, and resembles the engraved image on its southeastern face. The scene is dominated by a standing Buddha figure on the left side and next to him and above are three Buddhas sitting upon lotus thrones. Below them are ten figures of donors or disciples of Buddha, depicted in two rows.[881]

The figure of a standing Buddha is carved on a rock face below the fort of Saling, high above the mouth of the Hushe River into the Shyok River. The village of Saling on the right bank of the Shyok can be reached from Khaplu, the centre of the Ghanche District, from the southern side of the river by a bridge in the east of the town. The site above a mosque was discovered in 1973 by Max Klimburg.[882] The ca. 8 m high graffito of a figure was apparently not finally executed as a relief. The details of the image – or rather the outline for a relief which was not executed by the sculptor – and its attributes are hard to trace. Distinctive marks such as the stupa in the crown and a jug of ambrosia in the left hand portray (symbolize) the figure as Maitreya. His right arm is raised with his hand displaying the *abhaya mudrā*, "the gesture of assuring safety or fearlessness" (or rather the *vitarka mudrā*, the "gesture of teaching"?).

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[877] See a relief slab from Jamālgarhī of the 4th – 5th century: Zwalf 1985, 96 fig. 125.

[878] Duncan 1906, 298–302 and 1913, 270–274. Francke 1926, 186–187. See also Denwood 2007, 50. A critical summarizing review of all earlier readings of the three inscriptions by Csoma de Körös (Vigne 1836, 1838), Francke (Duncan 1906, 1913) and Denwood (2007, 50) has been made by Schuh 2011, 338–360.

[879] Beckwith 1987, 11, 19–20.

[880] Arif 2000, 233 fig. 2.

[881] De Filippi 1932, 57.

[882] Klimburg-Salter (ed.) 1982, 20 fig. 2. Filigenzi 2015, 171 fig. 57 a/b and 172 footnote 244 referred to "inverted-V lines above the head "of the Bodhisattva, which suggest a canopy frame as around the Naupura Buddha. A more detailed study of the Saling relief would clarify this observation.

The site of Saling (Tibetan: *Sa-gliṅg*) marks not only a resting place on the ancient "upper route" connecting Ladakh with Baltistan and the road leading from the high Karakorum through the Hushe Valley, but also indicates a sacred place near a hot spring.[883] The Buddha may have been thought as a welcome sign for the travellers coming from Purig and entering Baltistan. The ancient road leads from Khaplu and Saling along the right bank of the Shyok to Balghar-Foqnaqh and from there to Kiris, east of the confluence of Shyok with Indus. Kiris (Kye-ris), the smallest territory of the five Balti kingdoms and the more powerful kingdoms Skardu, Shigar (Ši-dkar), Khaplu (Kha-bu-lu) and Kartaksho (Gar-dag-ša) in Kharmang, was the starting point for the roads leading to Skardu or Shigar.

The rock face east of the Buddha figure reveals four series of six carvings depicting "terraced stūpas" of the Tibetan style, one stupa with traces of red paint. Four more stupa images arranged in two lines have been found high up on the rock. A Tibetan inscription: *chos ched la* has been read by Dieter Schuh as "for the purpose of the (Buddhist) law (Dharma)".[884] The unfinished relief at Saling, and the fine image of Maitreya in Parkuta (Mehdiabad) belong to a group of Buddhist monuments, including the Buddha reliefs and stelae around Kargil.[885]

The fine relief from Parkuta (Mehdiabad) in Kharmang depicts his image by virtue of his attributes, such as the antelope skin on the left shoulder as (a bejewelled) Avalokiteśvara, who symbolizes compassion *(karuñā)* (not Maitreya, the future Buddha), wearing a three-leaved crown. His right hand is raised in the vitarka mudrā, and the left hand holds a water-jar *(kuṇḍikā)*, (one of the characteristic attributes of Maitreya). The Tibetan style of the *Byams pa* is evidenced by the skin of an antilope *(ajina)* which covers his shoulder.[886]

[+ The Saling relief is located close to] the ancient Chumik Khari Mosque built with an added store building below the rock with the ruins of a fort called Sandoq Khar, ("box fort" in Balti) [+ the sentence was partly reconstructed]. The site is also called Saling Chotron: Arif 2000, 234 figs 1–2. A Balti poem sings of the "flower-castle" there (Francke 1907d, 104), which is mentioned also as Sagling *mkhar* (Francke 1926, 231, 240). For a detailed overview of the site and its history, see: Schuh 2011, 674–696 with images of stupa carvings fig. 16–22. The site with the Buddha relief and rock carvings has been finally documented by the PGAM in 2009.

[883] In 1716/17 the Yabgo ruler of Khaplu, Dabla Khan, assembled troops from Skardu and Shigar at *Sa-gliṅ (gi) mkhar,* the fort Sandoq Khar, to defend the territory against the Ladhaki invasion. Schuh 2008, 89.

[884] Schuh 2011, 685.

[885] Parkuta (Mehdiabad): The relief was documented by PGAM in 1998. Mentioned by Afridi 1988, 26 and Arif 2000, 234 fig. 7, he refers also to other rock art sites around Parkuta (figs 5, 6, 8).

[886] The representation resembles a Maitreya statue of gilt copper from Nepal, 11th century: Schroeder 2001, no. 169a.

Another relief showing a Buddha triad was found on an oblong boulder near the village of Lamsah above the Shigar River at the ancient pathway leading from Shigar to Skardu.[887] The surface of the granite boulder (6,70:3,80:4,20 m) is partly flaked off, and therefore the details of the composition are not clearly preserved. It displays three figures with a central bodhisattva standing on a lotus. Visible in front of him are a seated Buddha Śākyamumi to the left and the standing Padmapāṇi, bearing a lotus.[888] In its representation the scene resembles a relief dating to the pre-Rin-chen bzan-po period from Kardang in Lahaul-Spiti, Himachal Pradesh showing also a triad with Bodhisattvas – Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya and Vajrapani.[889] The representation of the lotus-bearer, who is believed to have propagated Buddhism after the death of Gautama Buddha, is also popular in Tibet. This fact explains also his presence in some of the Buddha reliefs in Baltistan.

Strikingly, all of the Buddha reliefs are located on major pilgrim and trade routes leading to passes. This is true for the Naupura Buddha in the west, which is located at the entrance of the Kar Valley leading to the Chonchar Pass (4415 m) and farther to the road system in the Upper Indus Valley, or the huge relief of the Jahanabad Buddha in the Malam-jabba Valley of Swat, which holds an important position in connecting Gandhara with Uḍḍiyāna and Indus Kohistan.[890] The other Buddhist icon, the Maitreya of Mulbekh in the east, is located near a site before the Zoj La Pass, the gateway not only to Ladakh but also to one of the main routes across the eastern Karakorum towards Yarkand, Khotan and other oases along the Silk Routes of Central Asia. They do not form simple guideposts or symbolic religious demonstrations against still animistic-shamanistic tribal groups, but instead like most of the Buddhist carved images and devotional graffiti they are expressions of piety and worship. Buddhist merchants using these interregional routes between the different parts of Bolor, Central Asia, Kashmir and Ladakh may have donated these monumental rock images "as both a way to earn merit as well as a sign of gratitude for having survived the dangerous journeys".[891] Local natural calamities such as sudden changes in weather and frequent landslides, and also the danger of rapacious attacks constantly threatened travellers underway through this high mountain region. Nonetheless, not only the desire to ban such calamities or to show gratitude for a lucky deliverance after dangerous travels may have been a motivation to donate such monumental images. Their creation near significant places as known from the monastery of Naupura near Gilgit, Manthal and Olting near Skardu or Saling near Khaplu can also symbolize both the religious and the political power of a local ruler.

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[887] Mentioned by Jettmar 1990b, 811 fig. 10 and 2002, 132. The central figure from the crown to the feet without the lotus pedestal is 1.75 m high; the standing bodhisattva on the right is 1.56 m high.

[888] For his role see: Getty 1928, 61–65.

[889] Thakur 2001, 41 pl. 4.

[890] Rafiullah Khan 2011, 208–211. [+ The rock sculpture of Jahanabab, defaced by an attack, was restored by the ISMEO Italian Mission in 2014–2016 (see Filigenzi 2020)].

[891] Ham 2010, 22.

9.3 Rock carvings and paintings in Baltistan and Astor [Table 36.1]

Besides the magnificent Buddha reliefs of Baltistan, only few other archaeological monuments are known from Baltistan. This lack has been explained by the few explorers and travellers such as Ujfalvi or Lady Duncan who for the first time recorded the pre-Islamic heritage of this region. Later expeditions such as the De Filippi expedition of 1913–1914 increased the scientific world's awareness of the delicately ornamented vernacular architecture.

Rock carving sites in Baltistan of the Buddhist period reveal different types of the stupa. The depiction of Buddha himself, which is common in the imagery of the Diamer Region, seems to be restricted to the monumental rock reliefs.

The most characteristic type of sacred building in Baltistan is the 'terraced stupa' of the so-called "cubistic style" with its prominent reproductions at Gol near the confluence of Shyok and Indus, across the Humayun Bridge. A solitary rock at Balghar Foqnaqh on the right bank of Shyok, opposite Fartaq between Yugo and Khaplu, reveals excellently designed monumental examples of this stupa form with unusual floral and symbolic decoration, such as striking swastikas (in Sanskrit meaning "state of prosperity", *yung drong* in Balti).[892] This symbol is drawn as an equilated cross with its arms bent at right angles in right-facing form and refers to a Indian solar pattern and to Tibetan Lamaism. The popular motif occurs as part of pre-Islamic tradition on wooden panels of vernacular architecture of Baltistan in the centre of a decoration or as a continual Greek fret.[893] These images belong to a period of the Bolorian state before the 8th century. Drawings of the later 'cross-shaped' or 'cruciform type' stupa, a term that Francke applied for the first time to the stupa image of Darkot, also reminds of Tibetan prototypes and find equivalents in Ladakh.[894]

From the Dumsun Valley, in the east of Khaplu, singular representations of quivers have been attested. In the shape they resemble the so-called Iranian *tarkash* or *tirdan*, as known from actual examples dating to the Safavid period. The *tarkash* is made of leather, whose surface of velvet is embroidered with bronze bosses.[895]

The renaissance of the old religion is strongly indicated by a singular "fresco"[896] in Baltistan – a newly discovered painting from Chaghdo near the village of Nar situated on the right bank of the Indus to the east of Skardu [Table 36.2].[897] Nar with its mountain fort

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[892] For photographs of the rock, see: Jettmar 1987c, 41; 1990b, 808 fig. 9. Arif 1992a, pl. 3.

[893] Scerrato [E.I.] 2011, 254.

[894] Francke, 'A Tibetan Inscription on the Darkot Pass', in: Stein 1928, 45–47 and appendix L, 1050–51. fig. 46. Denwood 2007, 49–50 fig. 4. Cruciform stupas at Gol: Jettmar 1990b, 808 fig. 8.

[895] + Here HH added a quote: "Khorasani 2006, 314, cat. 436, 438".

[896] + Actually, either a tempera wall painting *(a secco)* (cf. Lo Bue 2006: 90) or a *fresco-secco* wall painting, a kind of water-colour mixed with milk of lime.

[897] Near Nar there are ruins of an ancient mountain castle (Khar), also mentioned in Tibetan documents from Leh (Schuh 2008, 428–429). For a detailed description of the site and its history, see: Schuh 2011, 361–372 (with photos of the painting), 563–595. The painting of Nar-Chaghdo was discovered

(Khar), situated on the ancient route connecting Khaplu and Shigar, safeguards the access to the territory of the kingdom of Ši-dkar (Shigar). The "fresco" on a slightly overhanging rock face demonstrates the veneration in which stupas were held. Three stupas of Tibetan style are shown on terraces with a *pūrṇaghaṭa*, the vase of plenty. The colourful composition consists of mostly seated worshippers, one wearing a flag, arranged in two separate groups of apparently noble persons, and of saddled horses with headgear (?). The noble persons in the upper row seated on a carpet may represent the Raja of Shigar (Ši-dkar) with his wife. The motifs depicted refer to the "seven precious possesions"[898] of the Cakravartin, a universal monarch: queen, minister, general, jewel, wheel, horse and elephant. Depicted between the stupas are possibly two standing elephant's tusks. In a document from Leh addressed to the king of Ladakh rendering the services of a general engaged in military expeditions against Baltistan beyond Khaplu as far as Shigar, there may be a reference to the Buddhist site of Shigar reflected in the "fresco":[899] "In the Water-Tiger Year (ca. 1722) […] the great trees of Ši-sgar were cut. An inscription was carved on the rock. The relics of Buddha's bones in his elephant incarnation, which had withered through old age and were kept in a mound, the horn of Buddha in his rhinoceros incarnation, the rifles, etc., of Skar-rtse, the famous iron drums, etc., were handed over to us". The aforementioned elephant tusks which had been kept in a mound, perhaps a stupa, could be the same as depicted on the fresco of Chaghdo.

The elegant painting is reminiscent in style of scenes at the Sumtsek in the monastery of Alchi in Ladakh, dating from the 12th century. In a panel, the seated universal monarch (cakravartin) is surrounded by motifs referring to the "seven precious possessions".[900]

The Shigar hillock site clearly is also the location of a monastery as the rock images of monks and pious inscriptions testify [Table 35.1–2]. The finds of *ts'a ts'as*, clay seals, near Skardu are another hint for the existence there of a Buddhist monastery. And the Brāhmī inscription carved on the boulder at Shahi Mardan near the village of Kachura bears witness to a monk named Saṃgharakṣita coming from the new monastery *(saṃghārāma)*.[901] This mention may refer to ruins of a monastery, which were found above the village of Ghazi Abad. There Buddhist carvings on a rock were observed, which display also three stupas of the cubic type.

The city of Astor, mentioned by al-Bīrūnī as Aswar, due to its strategical location on a main route connecting Kashmir with Gilgit and Baltistan with the Upper Indus, was also of

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by Nazir Ahmad Khan in 1994 (Nazir Khan 1998; see also Nasim Khan 2001) and was copied by the PGAM in 1996. Original documentation by S. Hauptmann-Hamza, drawing for publication by E. Ochsenfeld: Hauptmann 2005, 36–37 fig. 28.

[898] Faxian during his attendance at the "procession of images" in the oasis of Khotan mentions "the seven precious substances, which were "grandly displayed", the *saptaratna*, gold *(suvarṇa)*, silver *(rūpya)*, lapis lazuli *(vaiḍūrya)*, rock crystal *(sphaṭika)*, coral *(musāragalva)*, ruby *(ruhitamukta)*, diamond or smaragd *(aśmagarbha)*: Legge 1886, 18–19. Deeg 2005, 512 footnote 2303.

[899] Francke 1926, 233.

[900] Goepper 1996, 38–41.

[901] Hinüber 1989b, 74 no. 68a, pl. 136.

political importance. The Astor Valley is connected with Baltistan by the route leading from Satpara, traversing the Deosai Plateau. Due to the absence of archaeological research in that valley, its importance as one of the main crossroads between Baltistan and the lower part of the Upper Indus remains unfathomable.

Another hillock site in the Shyok Valley above the village of Surmo in the east of Khaplu exposes the ruins of around 11 large stupas.[902]

Around Gilgit a number of architectural remnants of the Buddhist period are still preserved. A chain of stupas from the monastery of Naupura was mentioned by Biddulph in 1876. On the road to Ishkoman another stupa is situated at Henzal, and three of these sacral buildings are present in Yashpur. The stupa of Thol in Nager, first described by Stein in 1907, was destroyed during the construction of the KKH.[903] In 1992 it was possible to identify and document a monument, visible from afar on a plateau high above Jutial at Gilgit, as a still remaining Buddhist building. It represents the tower-like shape of the terraced stupa which is known from carvings near the junction of the Gilgit with the Indus and from Baltistan. This landmark is known as "Minar of Taj Moghul" [Table 21.2]. In Shah Rais Khan's history of Gilgit a conqueror called Taj Moghul is accredited with having built this *minar* as a victory monument and also the other ones at Henzal (Hanzil) and Thol.[904] According to a local legend reported by Shah Rais Khan, Tajik Moghul was a pious Ismai'li king of Badakshan, who had overrun Gilgit and Yasin and defeated Tor Khan, the ruler of Gilgit, during the period of the

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[902] The site of Surmo Khar has been surveyed by the PGAM in 1996. Mentioned by Arif 2000, 234.

[903] Naupura [+ Here HH left an orphan note: "see footnote 124"]. Fussman 2004. – Henzal: Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33 with photo. mentioned by Stein 1907, 19; Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1426; Jettmar 1993b, 93. – Yashpur on the mountain slope above the street leading from Gilgit to Ishkoman is a Buddhist site with three stupas and a cemetery. Survey of the PGAM 1998. – Thol: Noticed by Count Kosui Otani during the Hongwanji Expedition in 1902, 868 and described by Stein 1907, 20 fig. 4; mentioned by Schomberg 1935, 101; Jettmar 1993b, 92–93 and 2002, 132. The Census Report for 1931 mention two stupas, "one on the hillside about three miles east of Gilgit", perhaps Jutial, "and the other on the road to Nagar between Chalt and Minapin", perhaps Thol: Ganhar – Ganhar 1956, 210. – Ruins of a stupa near the rock carving site of Barmas Das East (for the rock carvings, see Fussmann – [Bandini-] König 1990) near Gilgit were discovered by the PGAM in 2007.

[904] Dani 1987b, 111; 1987c, 13. The History of Gilgit by Shah Rais Khan from Gilgit (1885–1974), covers the time from 8th century AD to 1991, excluding Baltistan. He was a descendant of the Raja of Gilgit, son of Raja Ali Dad Khan. The narration was put down in writing in Urdu on the basis of his family's history and local folklores in the early 1970ies to glorify the ancestry of the Trakhan Dymasty. He emphasized the dynastic role of the Gilgit rulers in disregard of the neighbouring principalities in Punyal, Yasin, Hunza and even Chitral. An appraisal of the historical value of the narration in confrontation with other historical notices by Leitner, Biddulph and Lorimer and a "brief and faulty" account such as Hashmatullah Khan history of Gilgit (Tarikh-i-Jammu) is given by Dani 2001, 167 passim.

Trakhan Dynasty; he introduced the Ismai'li belief into the region.[905] But this king does not represent a historical figure of the 14th century, and thus may be a reminiscence of an invasion of western Mongolian (or Qalmaq) tribes into Chitral and Yasin. The name may reflect only a title as Tajdar-i-Mogal, the "King of the Mongols". Shah Rais Khan's history of Gilgit referring to a version by Hashmatullah Khān published in 1939 therefore cannot represent a historical fact about an Ismai'li conqueror in ca. 1300. "Tales about this conqueror recorded prior to 1939 neither suggest a similar date nor mention any specific religious affiliation of the invader"[906] as Wolfgang Holzwarth has emphasized.[907] According to another local legend in Gilgit the *minar* at Jutial was erected by three Balti princes, who had invaded Gilgit, Yasin and Chitral during the 17th century.

10 The Dawn of Islamization[908]

The process of Islamization in the different regions of the Northern Regions took place in several stages. The first appearance of Islam in Gilgit, according to later local historical sources, was presumed for the 13th – 14th century.[909] According to Hashmatullah Khan it was during the first period of the Trakhan Dynasty under the reign of Shah Rais Khan that Islam was introduced by Sayyid Shah Afzal from Badakshan. His *ziyarat* is still preserved in Gilgit. Holzwarth, regarding Mirza Haidar Dughlat's account about the region in ca. 1500 as being inhabited only by Kafir tribes, concluded that the first advent of the new religion was connected with inroads by Muslim troops from Yarkand ever since the 16th century. In Indus Kohistan the conversion to Sunni Islam took place during the 18th century, up to about ten generations ago.[910] The conversion is connected with the names of Pakhtun missionaries from Swat and Buner. In the 19th century the region seems to have been widely converted to Islam, but paganism was still remembered, as the Court in 1839 made mention: "On the upper branch of the Indus lies the regions of Ghilghit, Ashoor, Goraei, Khélooman, and Balooman, formerly inhabited by the Caffers".[911] Nonetheless, in spite of ca. three hundred years of Islamic dominance, pagan traditions including the conception of a world of spirits full of demons, *peris* and *ruis* still survived until the second half of the 19th century. Early explorers such as Biddulph noted evidence of pagan beliefs or "idolatrous customs" preserved in names of tutelary gods such as *Taiban*, the protective deity and founder of the Gor Valley community, which he called the last stronghold of non-Islamic beliefs.[912] At the foot of the Chamuri Peak, from where the visitor has a stunning view of the Gor panorama, is the sanctuary of Taiban, "Taiban's Garden", lying in a grove of holm oaks symbolizing the demon. On the steep, scarped, rocky side of the mountain ridge is a rock called "Horse of Taiban", which with a strong imagination resembles a horseman. The locals called him a *deo*, a mighty, but benevolent demon. He shows similar characteristics of the legendary Śirí Badát, the legendary last Buddhist king of Gilgit, who after his death was transformed in a *devako*, a demigod. The god *Sāban* was venerated in the nearby village Ges, which is connected to Gor. Such local tutelary deities are also known from other valleys, such as Halabān in Darel, Naron (Narun) in Chilas, Sayabān in the Sai Valley, and the goddess *Murkum*, mistress of goats around Gilgit in Punyal and Haramosh Valley. They all seem to belong to the same type and have the same characteristic features. Their sanctuary lies in a grove of holm-oaks and junipers, the holy trees of the Dards, and only goats as pure animals are allowed to be slaughtered at the crude stone altar. In a village in Yasin, "the people, though professed Mussulmans, still make offerings to the god Shaitum".[913] In the different religious systems among the Shina-speaking Dardic peoples there existed many features which correspond to the still pagan cult of the Kalasha.

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[905] Mentioned by Durand 1900, 36 as "Buddhist tower" and by Stein 1907, 19 referring to Major J. Manners Smith, Report of the Pamir Boundary Commission, p. 33; Haughton 1913, 192–198 gives for the stupa-like monument different source of its origin as handed down by Gilgitis. Jettmar 1975, 202; 1993b, 93; 2002, 13." The pillar in Jutial, a stupa-like building": Stellrecht [Müller-Stellrecht] 1980, 126. Dani 1987c, 13–14.

[906] Dani 2001, 170.

[907] See Holzwarth 1997, 33; 1998, 315–316; 2006, 175, 178.

[908] + Title added.

[909] Biddulph 1880, 117, 134; Lorimer 1929, 508; Dani 2001, 165; Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 33.

[910] After Leitner 1893, appendix IV, 5 "they have been converted to Islám four or five generations ago", see also: Barth 1956, 18.; Jettmar 1983b, 511; Frembgen 1999, 83–85.

[911] Court 1839, 313.

Sir George Scott Robertson mediated an idea of the many different religious concepts and rituals in the four cultural entities of Afghan Kafiristan, after the Afghan conquest of 1895/1896 renamed in Nuristan, where paganism lasted almost until the end of the 19th century.[914] Some of the ancient traditions have survived as a substratum.[915] All Kafir communities produced monumental images of deities, ancestors and "big men" representing tribal heroes.[916] Stones as religious symbols and figures carved from wood representing gods were placed in specially constructed shrines, separated from the normal villages. Rocky formations with a central cult stone or sites with holly mulberry or oak trees were favoured for cult places. Similar open-air ceremonial structures also existed in the Upper Indus region. Jettmar described several mountain shrines in the Gilgit area, where he was able to visit the stone altar of Murkum at Guré in Haramosh Valley in 1958.[917] But in this part of Dardistan there are no records of ritual art objects made of wood or stone.

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[912] Biddulph 1880, 15–16, 118. Douglas 1895. Dani 1991 (2. ed.) 78. Jettmar 1961a, 88–91; 1965, 110–111; 2002, 5–7, 32, 198. A detailed description of the sanctuary of Taiban, his worship until the beginning of the 19th century and his place in the then still living memory of the Gor community is owed to T. Schmitt, *Gor – Eine Talschaft am Indus.* Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Heidelberg, 1990, 91–94. The memory of this ancient legend seems to have been lost in Gor, as inquiries for the Taiban horse during a research visit in [+ September 1999] were negative. [+ according to Salwa Hauptmann's field notes].

[913] Biddulph 1880, 118.

[914] The medical officer visited the high mountain area of the Hindukush range for the first time in October 1889 during a short exploratory trip and remained there from September 1890 to October 1891. The publication of Robertson 1896 is the main source on Pre-Islam Kafiristan.

[915] Quotation added: "(Motamedi – Edelberg 1968)".

[916] Klimburg 1983.

The famous great temple of Imra in Kushteki in Prasun contained even 70 such statues.[918] Imra or Yamrai, in the Prasun Valley known as Mara, is the god of creation, growth and death and was worshipped as the main god of the Kati and Prasun Kafirs. A statue showing a female figure sitting on a wild goat was discovered in the village Shtiwe in the Prasun area. It has been interpreted as representing the goddess Disni / Disani.[919] She holds a central position among the female deities as *magna mater* for fertility and abundance of children and is the partner of the most powerful gods of the Kalasha pantheon.

The pantheon with its numerous divinities of the Kalasha Kafirs in Southwest Chitral, the last non-Islamic "enclave" of the Hindukush, reveals an idea of pagan religious concepts with the design of its sanctuaries and cult objects in the neighbouring eastern Dardic regions. In more recent times the Kalasha do not seem to have carved sculptures of their gods, but only figures of their ancestors as representatives of monumental Kafir art. There existed even abstract iconographic manifestations of these divinities, but only one wooden stylised statue of *Dezalik* has been documented in a place in the Bumburet Valley in Chitral.[920] The goddess protecting childbirth and other female concerns is venerated in the *bashali (baš'āli)* or women's house, and her statue was placed upon an altar in the corner. She is the sister of the Creator, the god named *Dezau*, and also the goddess of death. The pantheon of the Kalasha comprised eight gods, called *devalog* or *deu*. Less powerful than these female and male gods are spirits: the Jach *(jaç)* and the Suchi *(sūči)*.[921]

The introduction of Islam in Baltistan is connected with the name of Sayyid Ali Hamdani (1314–1384), son of Sayyid Shihab al-Din, the governor of Hamadan.[922] The mystic Shia missionary from Hamadan, a member of the Central Asian Sufi Kubrawiye order, undertook the first Islamic mission in Kashmir, where he travelled three times between 1372 and 1383. After his travel to various holy places in the Muslim world during the reign of King Shahabuddin, he and his son Mir Mohammed Hamdani accompanied by a great number of his followers went in 1372 to Kashmir to propagate Islam. After his successful conversion of the population in the valley, he travelled in 1382 to Tibet Khurd, now Baltistan, to preach the new religion, as mentioned by Sayyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh, a disciple of the Sayyid. The saint's stay there of about two and half years "brought revolutionary changes in the society", as documented by the erection of religious buildings in Baltistan for the propagation of Islam. According to local tradition, the Sayyid is known to have founded the Ambariq Mosque at Shigar [Table 38.1], which was erected by an architect and craftsmen whom he had brought from Kashmir. The wooden style of the mosques [Table 38.1–2], *khanquahs* and *astanas* in Skardu, Khaplu, Kiris and most conspicuous in Shigar "appears heavily dependent on influences mainly from Kashmir, its great and dominant neighbour".[923] The great Masjid-e Hamadan or Shah Hamadan mosque at Srinagar, the symbol of Islamisation in Kashmir, is seen as the model for all the wooden religious buildings in both Kashmir and Baltistan.[924]

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[917] Summarized in Jettmar 1975, 208–213.

[918] The village Kushteki is called Kstigigrom by Robertson 1896, 389–392; Jettmar 1975, 117; Klimburg 1999, 141–142, 168.

[919] Motamedi – Edelberg 1968, 6 fig. 1–2. For the goddess Disni / Disani, see: Jettmar 1975, 97–106; 1986, 68–72, 81. A temple of Disani in Wama, called *Disani-ama*, which contained a cult stone, is mentioned by Klimburg 1999, 149.

[920] Graziosi 1961. Jettmar 1975, 349–350 fig. 11; 1986, 80–81. Cacopardo – Cacopardo 2001, 70–71.

[921] Schomberg 1935; Morgenstierne 1947; Siiger 1967. For an overview of the Kalasha pantheon, the world of the spirits and their sanctuaries, see: Jettmar 1975, 339–360; 1986, 80–84.; Klimburg 1999, 139–159.

[922] Hamdani 1985. Rizvi 1993, 71–74. Dani 1989, 41; 2001, 232. About the mosques in wooden style of Baltistan, see: Arif 1988, especially Dani 1989, 117–149 and Klimburg 2005. For the Ambariq mosque at Shigar, see Dani 1989, 128–130 fig. 27, pl. XXb, XXI, XXIIa and 69–70. The building has been restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in 1998–1999.

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[923] Klimburg 2005, 149.

[924] + See also Noci 2006, Scerrato [E.I.] 2006. The manuscript here ends with these two words: "khanquahs and astanas". It is possible that originally HH wanted to elaborate here a little bit more on these two building typologies.

IV Epilogue

1 The Ancient Cultural Heritage of the Northern Areas ‘Doomed by the Dams’

One of the main challenges of future research is the systematic inventory of the rich archaeological and historical sites and monuments in the Northern Areas. Until 2008 the ‘Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas’ (PGAM) was able to register about 277 archaeological sites including 141 rock carving assemblages with 43,745 petroglyphs, among them 5246 inscriptions alone in this high mountain region. A stretch of around 93 km as the crow flies (in airline distance) or 110 km along the Indus River between Shatial in Indus Kohistan and the Raikot Bridge in the Diamer District has been intensively surveyed. Its documentation was accomplished in 2010. Yet a better understanding of the historical and cultural background of these monuments also needs to become a subject of current scientific projects. Along the ancient routes in the valleys, many ruins of settlements, smaller forts, resting places for the travellers, and sanctuaries still have to be identified. Important places such as the hilltop site of Hodar, the Buddhist monastery of Naupura near Gilgit, the Buddhist hill site at Shigar in Baltistan, with the ruins of a monastery and a large number of stupas, are waiting for more intensive research. The dramatic dimension of systematic plundering and devastation which occurs in many still unexplored cultural and historical sites in the Northern Areas has become obvious from archaeological objects occurring in collections outside Pakistan, originating from illegally looted ancient settlements and cemeteries. Even most of the megalithic stone circles at Seleharan at the confluence of Ghizer and Yasin rivers, in Yasin Valley, at Barandas or Daeen in Ishkoman, northwest of Gilgit, are threatened or even destroyed by this ongoing development. And in spite of all considerations to establish cultural institutions for the education of the local population since the 1980ies, there still exists no public museum, neither in Gilgit nor in Skardu or in Chilas, where the archaeological and ethnographical heritage could be preserved and presented both to the local population and to visitors from other parts of Pakistan and the world.

When Bridget Allchin in 1987 rated the petroglyphs in the high mountain region as one of the three major groups in South Asia, with the paintings and drawings in the hill region of Central India and in southern Deccan, with regard to the near future she pointed to their threat by all kinds of modern development. The conservation and protection of the rock art in each of the three regions “is a matter of urgency”. “This means that by careful planning the rock art can be spared: other rocks can be quarried, alternative routes chosen for roads, alternative sites for construction. More importantly, it means that there is time to plan development of these areas in such a way that the whole environment can be utilized without destroying its character”.[1]

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[1] Allchin 1987, 152–154.

Since 2006 the significance of a systematic documentation of the archaeological heritage obtained a new dimension when the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan finally decided to plan cascading the river from Bunji to Thakot [Besham] by constructing a series of (hydroelectric) hydropower projects along the Upper Indus gorges at Pattan, Dasu (4320 MW), Munda (740 MW), Basha (4500 MW), Bunji (7100 MW) and Kohala. The Dasu Hydropower Project (3700 MW) is planned at a site 7 km upstream of Dasu Bridge and 69 (74) km downstream of the Diamer-Basha Dam. The river in this part of Kohistan runs through a narrow deep-cut gorge, whose steep slopes left no place for any settlements in the past and nowadays. Hence, the ancient route as described by Stein on his last courageous exploration tour at the end of August 1942 [...].[2] In this part of the river valley, there are no archaeological remnants, rock carvings or inscriptions known. The only important site which is endangered by the Dasu Reservoir is Shatial, the famous emporium of Central Asian merchants with its singular accumulation of Sogdian inscriptions and the unique image of a Buddhist *triptychon*.[3]

The gigantic Diamer-Basha Dam near the village of Basha, belonging to the area of District Kohistan in Khyber Pakthunkhwa is planned to be built about 315 km upstream of the Tarbela Dam, 165 km downstream of Gilgit-Baltistan's capital Gilgit, and about 40 km downstream of Chilas, the headquarter of the Diamer District. It will be the highest roller-compacted concrete gravity dam in the world, which extends from the foundation to the crest to a maximum height of 272 meters. The gross capacity of the water reservoir will stand 7.5 million acre feet (MAF), with a live storage capacity of 6.4 MAF. The mega project will generate a capacity of 4500 MW electricity to bridge the widening demand of energy, and with its water storage will also be used for irrigating land. The impending Diamer-Basha reservoir covering an area of 32,000 acres (110 km^2) according to an estimation of 2006 will not only affect 31 settlements with at least 2995 houses located between Basha and Raikot Bridge and will force the resettlement of 26,398 inhabitants living in 3013 households.[4] It will flood more than 100 km of the KKH and require the relocation of 140 km highway. It also will inundate at a stretch of 105 km along the Indus River of at least 88 archaeological sites including 68 rock art complexes in the Diamer District with at least 5717 engraved boulders or rocks covered with 36,187 carvings, among them 3610 inscriptions alone. Central parts of the endangered rock art galleries after the UNESCO world heritage convention of 1972 have an "outstanding universal value" both as cultural and natural world heritage, which should be protected and preserved for future generations.

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[2] Stein 1944, 9 and 16–17 [+ orphan sentence].

[3] + Orphan sentence.

[4] A memorandum of the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in Lahore from January 2007 proceeds from the completion of the Diamer-Basha dam in 2015 and of the expected resettlement in 2014. Until this date an increase of the current 3013 households is expected up to 3800 in 2014. Three model villages at Thak Das, Harpan Das and Kino Das will resettle 4228 affected households. The Dasu hydropower project (3700 MW) is planned 2 km upstream of Dasu village and 69 km downstream of the Diamer-Basha dam. The Bunji hydropower project with an installed capacity of 5450 MW is ranked third in economic merit after Dasu and Basha. (4700 MW?). [+ See Hauptmann 2010].

The third hydropower project near Bunji with its 180-m high dam and a capacity of 7100 MW electricity will be probably located at the Indus upstream of its confluence with the Gilgit River near Asmani, and more about 15 km upstream of Sassi village on the Gilgit-Skardu road, about 83 km southeast of Gilgit. Not by this dam in the lower part of the Rondu gorge, but by the ongoing upgrading of the KKH the rock carving sites of Pari Das and Partab Bridge have been nearly completely destroyed. One of the most important epigraphic monuments of the western Himalayas, the large accumulations of petroglyphs at the Alam Bridge is endangered by the construction of the new bridge across the Gilgit River for the main connection of the KKH to Skardu. The upgrading of the KKH and the construction of new bridges are another threat for some of the rock carving sites situated above the water level of the future storage-lakes. The need for building materials for the establishment of houses and new settlements leads to the exploitation of the rock carving sites especially around Chilas and Thalpan, where an increasing part of the documented carved boulders and rocky reefs are blasted. The most dramatic loss of the cultural heritage not only in the Diamer-Basha region, but in all parts of Gilgit-Baltistan is caused by systematic illicit diggings, which ransacked major sites like the hill settlement of Patelo Kot above Hodar, the ruins of the monastery at Thalpan or the famous monastery ruins of Naupura near Gilgit, and above all by the plundering of the large ancient cemeteries. The investigation of the impressive Buddhist waterworks at the Satpara Lake, which maintained the irrigation of the Skardu plain, has been prevented through the construction of the Satpara Dam.[5]

Thanks to the activities of the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) in Gilgit since 1991, some of the most beautiful vernacular wooden mosques, astanas and Raja palaces in Hunza and Baltistan have been carefully restored.[6] The most spectacular example of these monuments is the majestical palace dominating the Hunza Valley above Baltit Village, renamed Karimabad in honour of His Highness Aga Khan. Its thorough investigation of at least 20 construction phases and conservation took place from 1981 to 1996. The earliest structures of the Baltit Fort date back to the 13th century. An already earlier foundation, perhaps from the 11th century is attested for the Altit Fort, located on a cliff across the Ulter stream on the eastern side of Karimabad, which guards the ancient track along the Hunza River forming the southern branch of the Silk Road leading to the Mintaka or Kilik passes and further into Central Asia. Other examples of vernacular monuments are the 400 years old Shigar Fort, the 331 years old Gulabpur Khanqua on the Shigar River, a religious building of the Noorbakshi sect in Baltistan, and the 200 years old raja palace of Khaplu. Yet, in this region, where different cultures and empires have been meeting through several millennia, there has been no scientific excavation at all since the short attempts of Shastri in 1938 at the monastery of Naupura and at the stupa of Henzal near Gilgit. The documentation and systematic publication of the rock art galleries in the upper Indus region in Northern Pakistan and Ladakh can therefore only be a first, although important step to illuminate the long history of the high mountain region. What Karl Jettmar, the late doyen of anthropological and archaeological research in the Northern Areas, already emphatically stressed in his first years of his engagement is still valid:[7] "An enormous amount of research is still to be done in the area in question – and it must be done soon if it is not to be too late. Every year counts". However, after the PGAM had finished the archaeological field work in 2013 with an archaeological survey at Baltistan not much has been done to take relevant measures for the preservation of the cultural heritage there, which is under dramatic threat. Many local traditions as symbols of ethnic identity, traditional dances, music, songs and tales of the past are already lost.[8]

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[5] Duncan 1906, 305. Emerson 1984, 105.

[6] Bianca 2005, 165–285. Hughes – Lefort 1986, 2006. Muhammad 2009.

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[7] Jettmar 1959b, 93; 1985c, 107, see also: Frembgen 1999, 91.

[8] + The information provided in this chapter will soon be outdated. Readers can follow the situation and find regular updates on resettlement, land acquisition, and on the cultural heritage plan on the WAPDA official website: http://www.wapda.gov.pk/index.php/projects/water-sector/under-construction/diamer-basha-dam. The reader will find some interesting additional information on what is going on, in the last pages of both Neelis 2017 and Zahir 2019. The first short article was published when this book was still being written, of the second work, HH was perhaps unaware of its ongoing publication. Both authors, along with M. Van Aerde and others, has published several other works on the Upper Indus rock art.

Bibliographic Abbreviations

Series [monographic issues / Ergänzungsbände]

AMI Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran

AMIT Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan

ANP Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies (Jettmar, K. ed. / Hauptmann, H. ed.). Philipp von Zabern, Mainz a. R.

BAR British Archaeological Reports

IsIAO RepMem Reports and Memoirs of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (Gnoli, G. ed.)

IsMEO RepMem Reports and Memoirs of the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Faccenna, D. / Gnoli, G. eds)

MANP Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans [Materials for the Archaeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan] (Hauptmann, H. ed.). Philipp von Zabern, Mainz a. R.

MMAFAC Mémoires de la Mission Archéologiques Française en Asie centrale. Répertoires des pétroglyphes d'Asie Centrale (Francfort, H.-P. ed.). De Boccard, Paris

SOR Serie Orientale Roma

ZELF Freie Universität Berlin Zentrum für Entwicklungsländerforschung

Journals / Series

AAs *Arts Asiatiques*

ArtAs *Artibus Asiae*

AIUON *Annali IUON* [*dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*]

AIT *Archäologie in Iran und Turan*

AMI *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*

AMIT *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan*

ACSS *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia*

ANP *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies*

AP *Ancient Pakistan*

ARIRIAB *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*

AVA-Beiträge *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie*

BAI *Bulletin of the Asia Institute (n.s.)*

Boletin APAR *Boletin* [de la] *Asociación Peruana de Arte Rupestre*

CAJ *Central Asian Journal*

EA *Eurasia Antiqua. Zeitschrift für Archäologie Eurasiens*

EW *East and West*

GJ *The Geographical Journal*

IPEK *Jahrbuch für prähistorische und ethnographische Kunst*

JIABS *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*

JAC *Journal of Asian Civilizations* (formerly: *JCA*)

JCA *Journal of Central Asia* (Centre for the Study of Civilisations of Central Asia, Islamabad)
JIAAA *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*
JRAS *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
PA *Pakistan Archaeology*
PEFEO *Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*
SAS *South Asian Studies* [journal of the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS)]
SRAA *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*
TAASA Review *Review of The Asian Art Society of Australia*
TÜBA-AR *Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji Dergisi*
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Institutions

CIPA International Committee for Documentation of Cultural Heritage
EFEO École française d'Extrême-Orient
IGNA Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
IICAS International Institute of Central Asian Studies Samarkand
IsIAO Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente
IsMEO Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
ISMEO International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies
ÖAW [Verlag der] Österreichische[n] Akademie der Wissenschaften

Classic sources

Ael. *NA* Aelianus *De natura animalium*
Arr. *Anab.* Arrian *Anabasis*
Arr. *Ind.* Arrian *Indica*
Ctesias [Phot., *Bibl.*] Ctesias *India//Persia* Photius *Bibliotheca*
Curt. Curtius Rufus *Historiae Alexandri Magni*
Dio Chr. *Or.* Dio Chrysostomus *Orationes*
Diod. Sic. Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca historica*
Dionys. Per. Dionysus Periegeta *Oikoumenes periegesis*
Hdt. Herodotus *Historiae*
Plin. *HN* Plinius *Naturalis historia*
Plut. *Mor.* Plutarch *Moralia*
Ptol. *Geog.* Ptolemaeus *Geographia*
Strab. Strabo *Geographica*

Varia

(n.F.) neue Folge
(n.s.) new series
[...] *missing*
[ ] various integrations

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Table 1

The Indus gorge in Kohistan.

2.1 The Nanga Parbat (8,125 m) as seen from Thalichi.

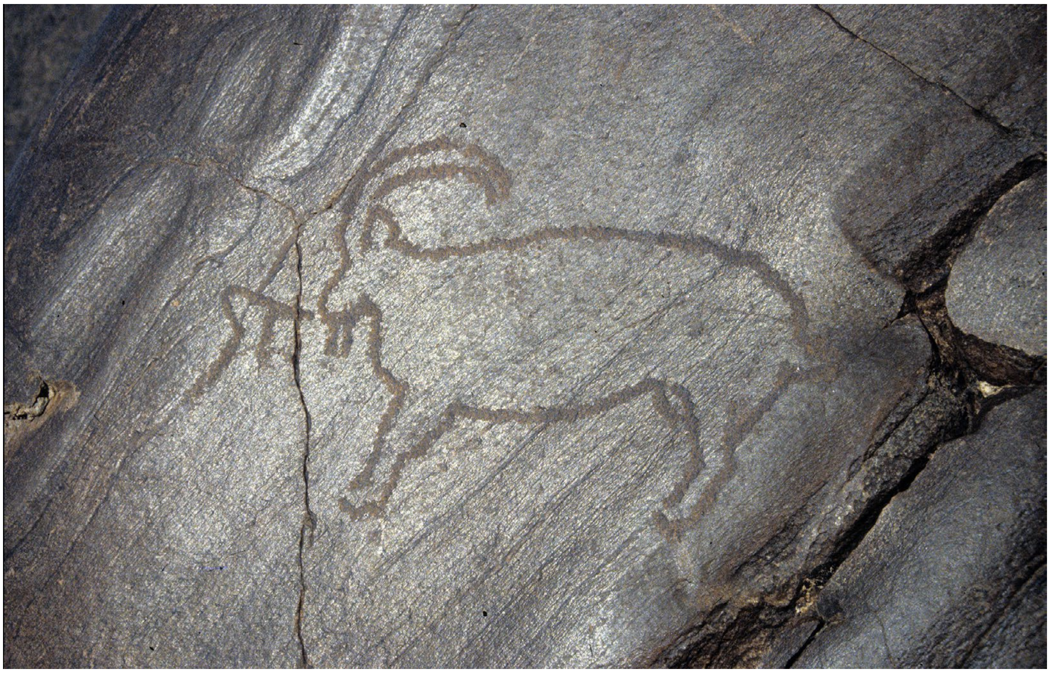
2.2 Harald Hauptmann and his wife Salwa Hauptmann at work in Ke Ges with the Nanga Parbat range in the background.

3.1 Mount Rakaposhi (7,788 m) as seen from the Hunza Valley.

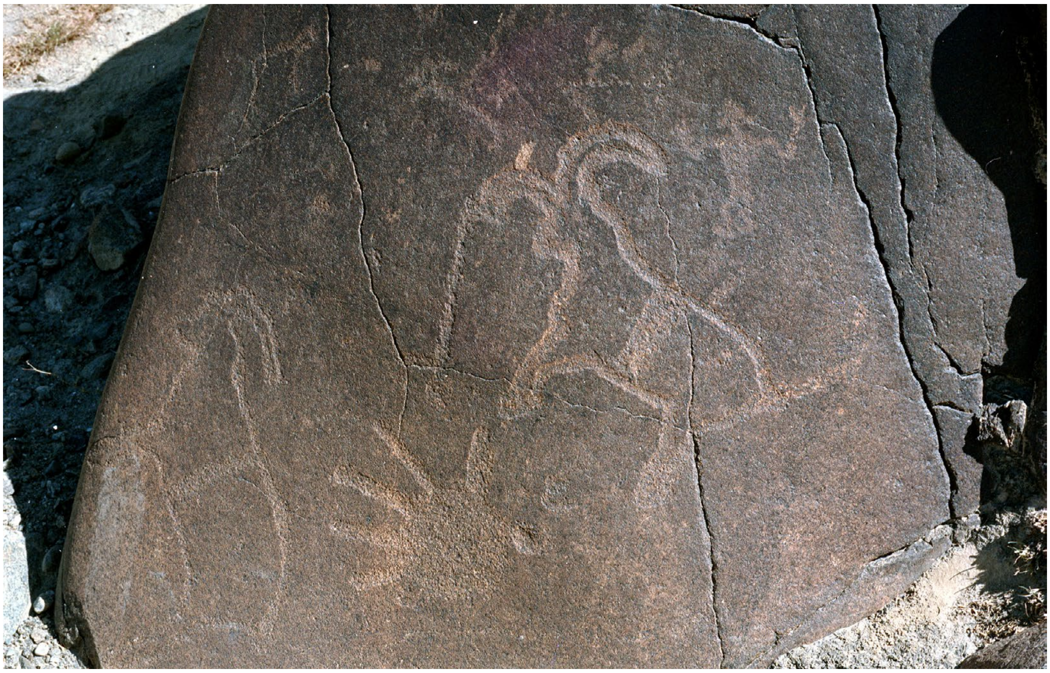
3.2 The Hunza Peak (6,270 m) with the "Lady Finger", Hunza Valley.

4.1 Mount Masherbrum (7,821 m) located at the head of the Hushe Valley (Baltistan).

4.2 The Skardu Basin in the Upper Indus Valley in Baltistan.

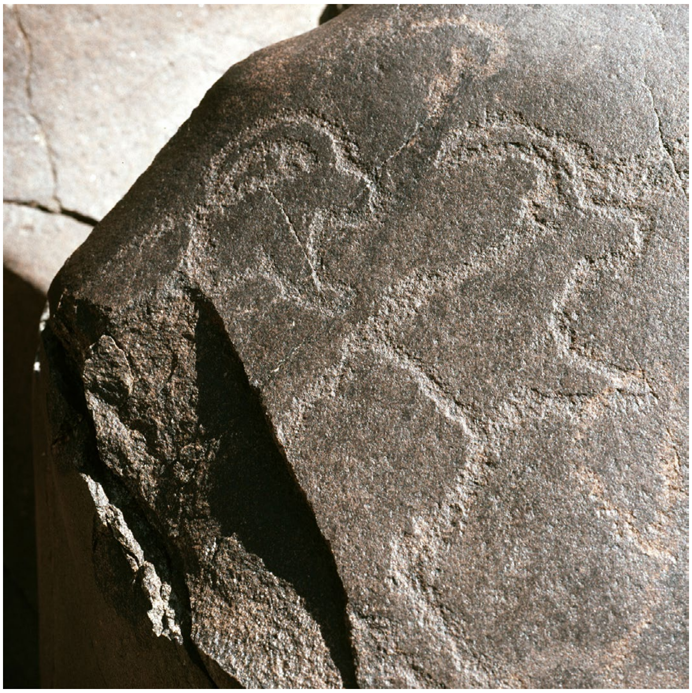


5.1 Early prehistoric carving of a caprine, Chilas III.

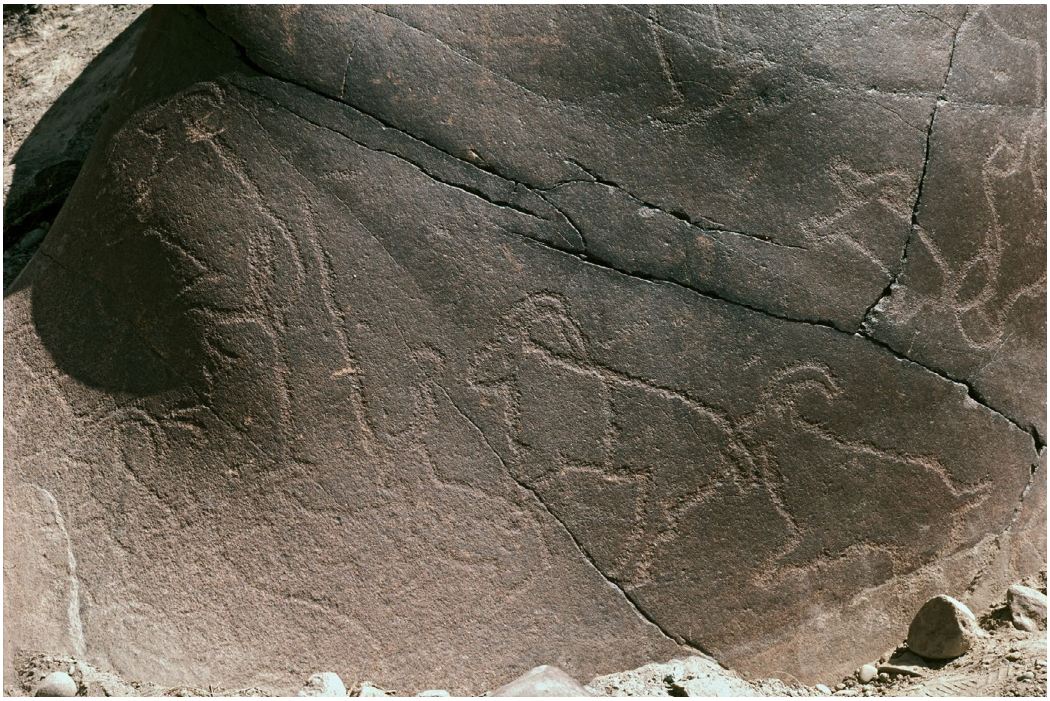


5.2 Caprines, handprint and human figure; early prehistoric period, Dadam Das.

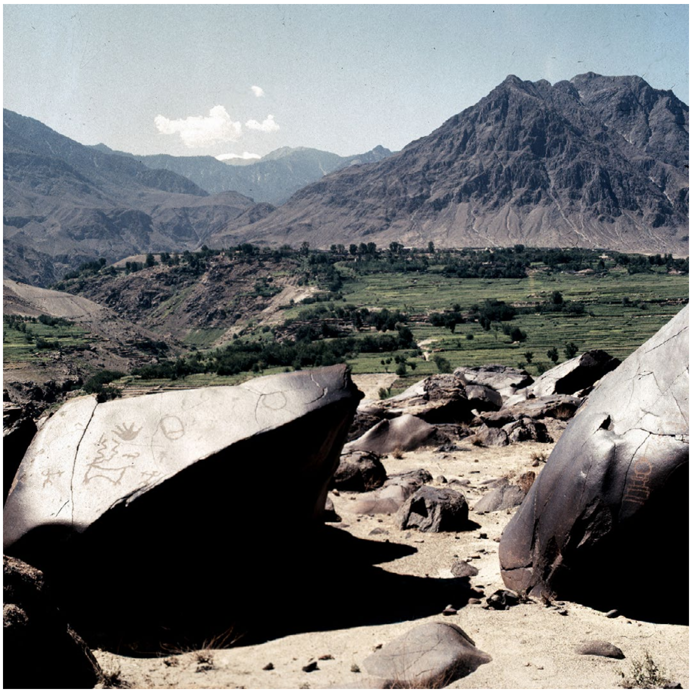
6.1



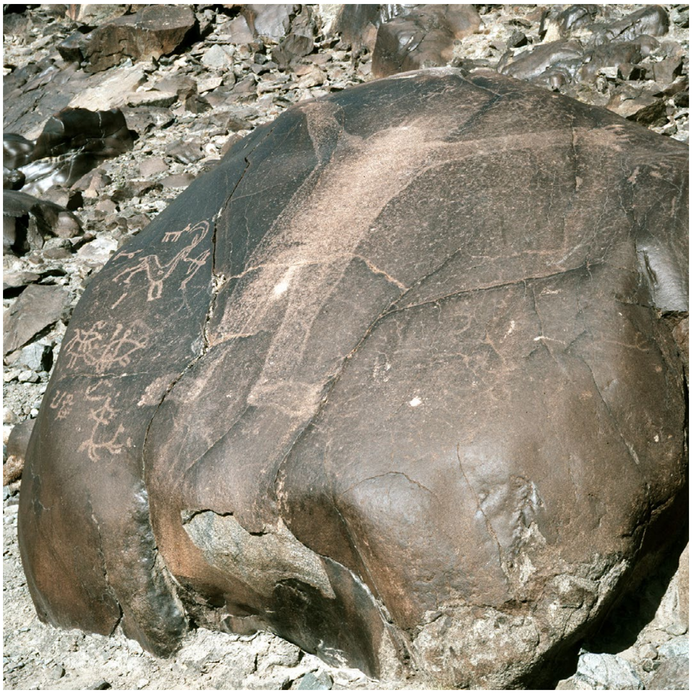
6.2



6.1 and 6.2 Heavily patinated carvings of caprines; early prehistoric period, Dadam Das.



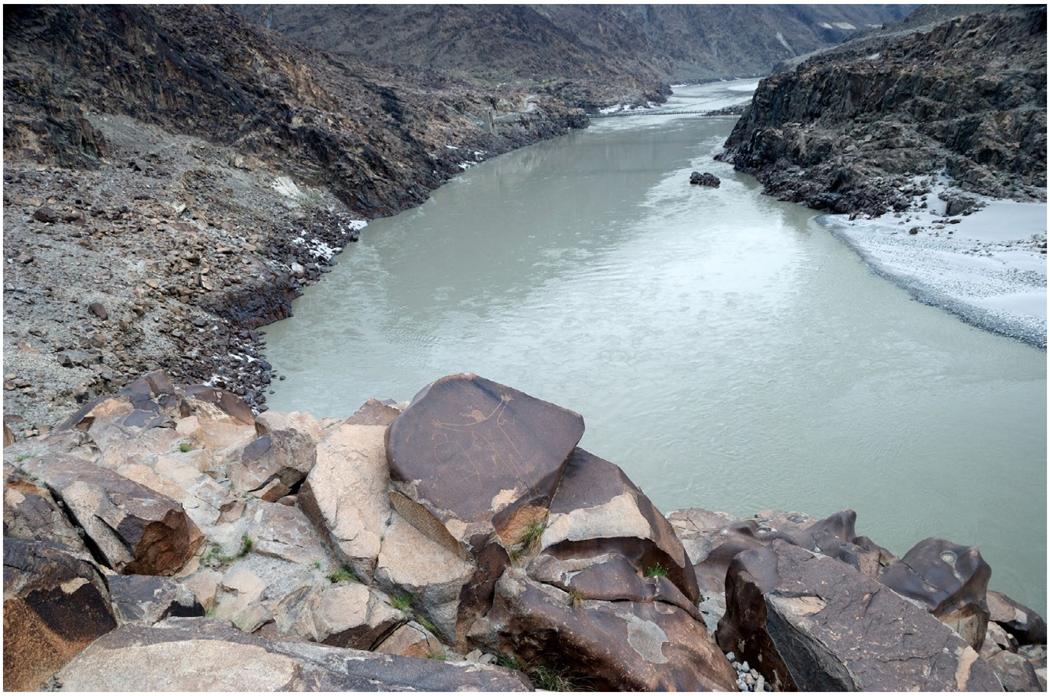
7.1 Prehistoric hunting scene, hand and foot prints, Ziyarat. In the background the village of Chilas.



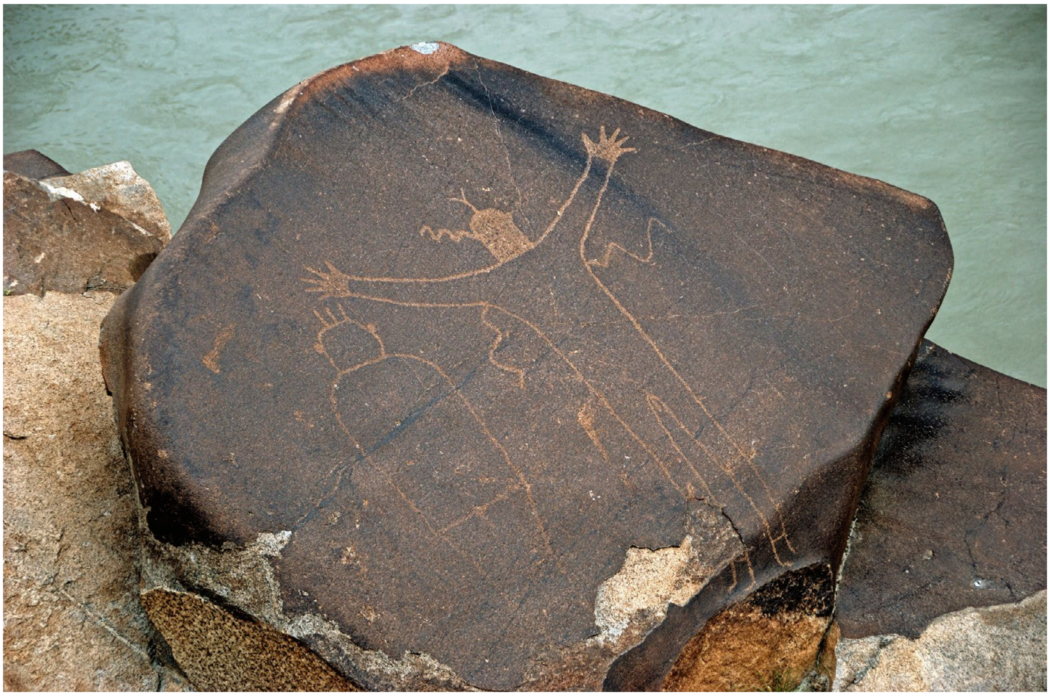
7.2 Prehistoric carving of a "giant" accompanied by a later hunting scene, Dadam Das.

Table 8

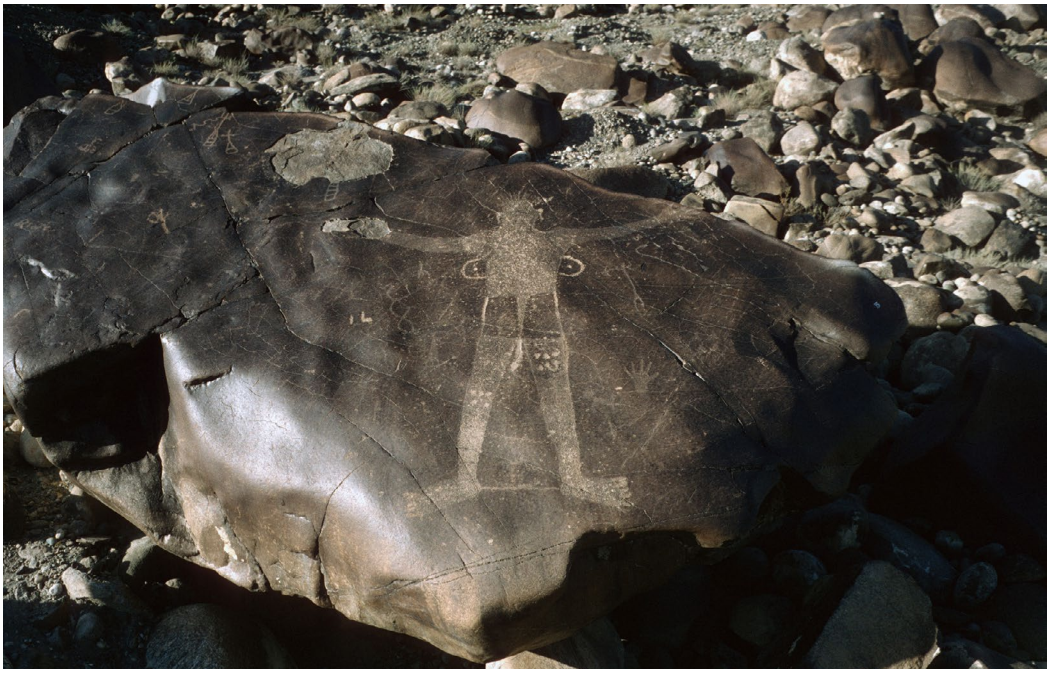
8.1



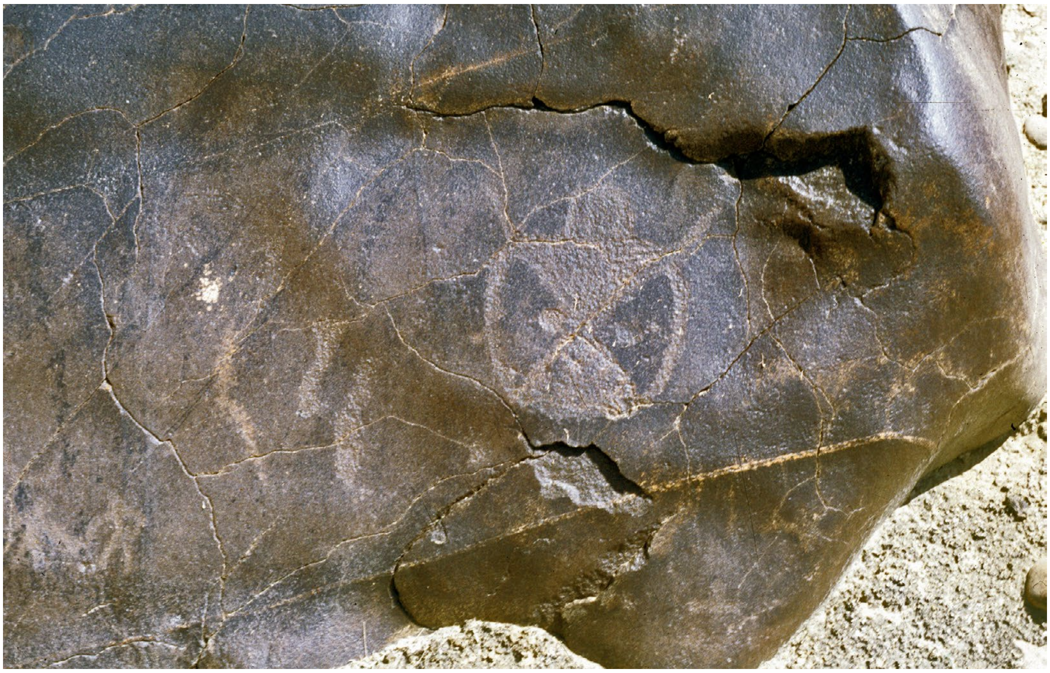
8.2



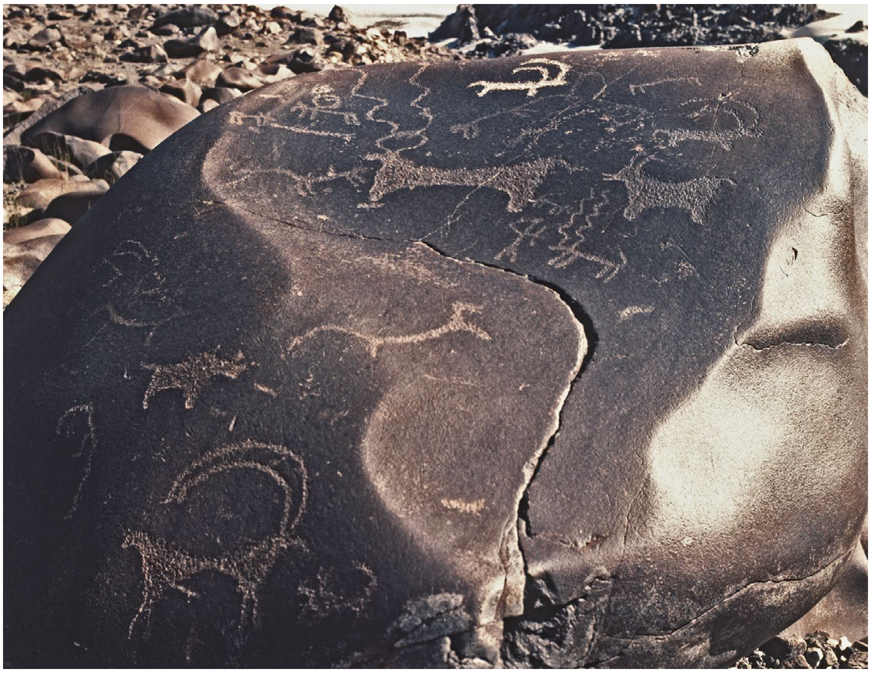
8.1 and 8.2 Two representations of prehistoric “giants” above the Indus River near Khanbary.



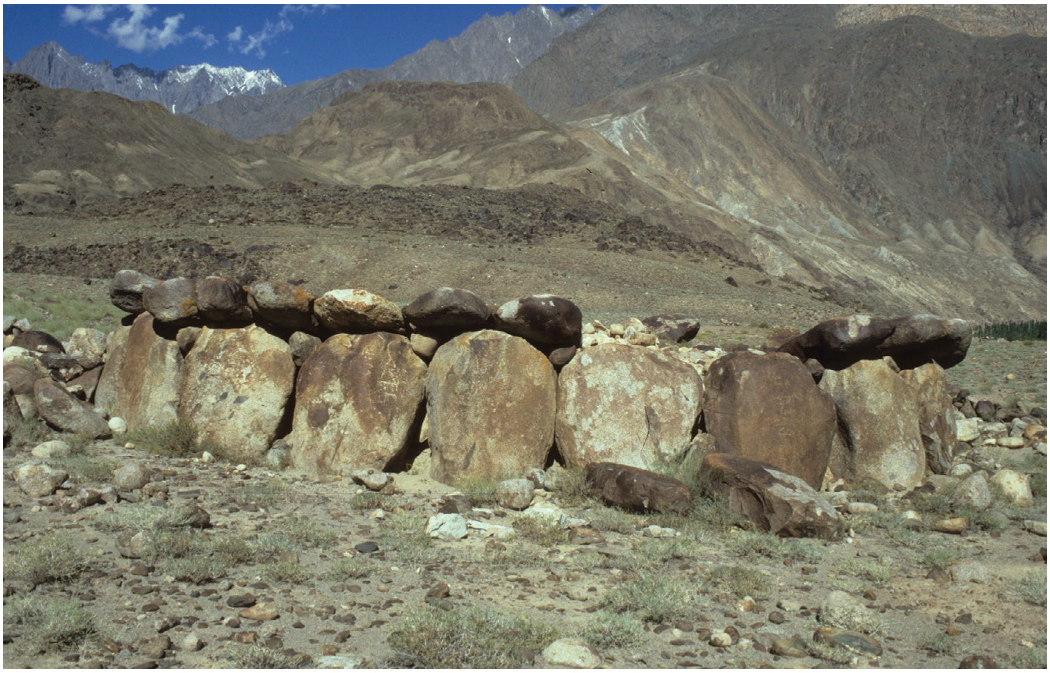
9.1 Prehistoric “giant” surrounded by carvings of various periods, Chilas VI.



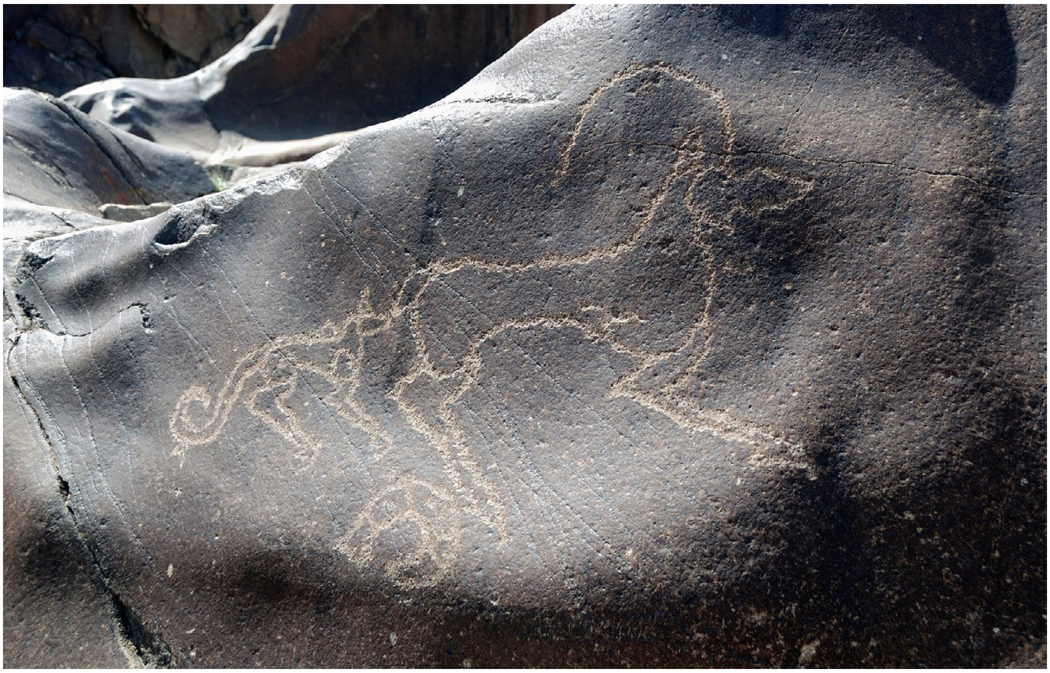
9.2 Mask of the Okunev type, Bronze Age, Ziyarat.



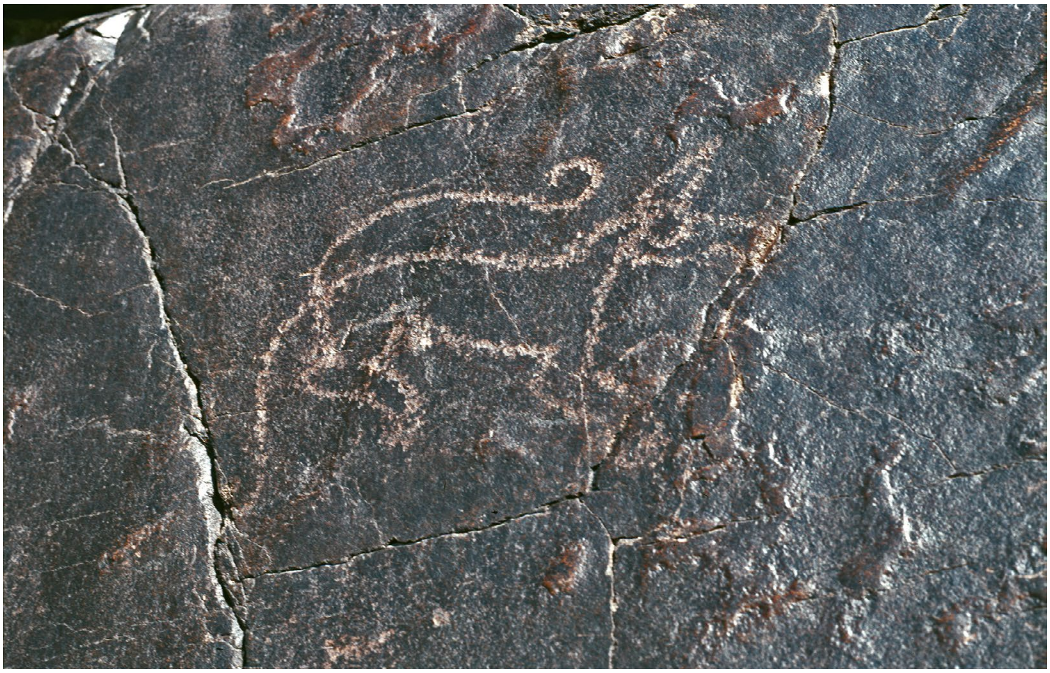
10.1 Prehistoric hunting scene showing ibexes and markhors, Thor North.



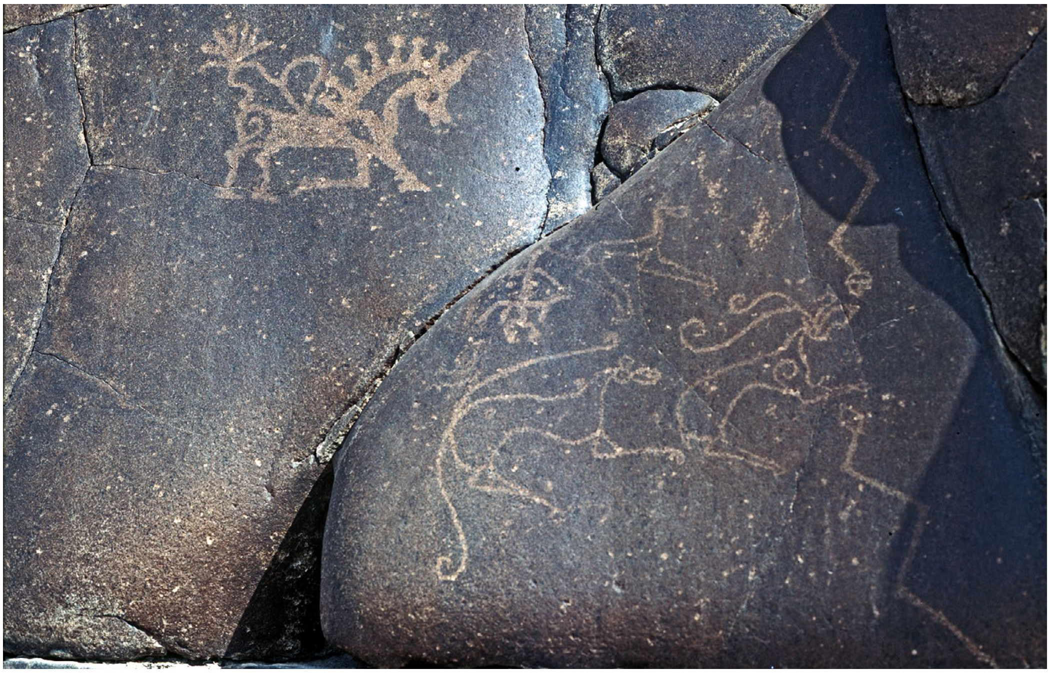
10.2 Megalithic sepulcral stone monument at Seleharan, Yasin.



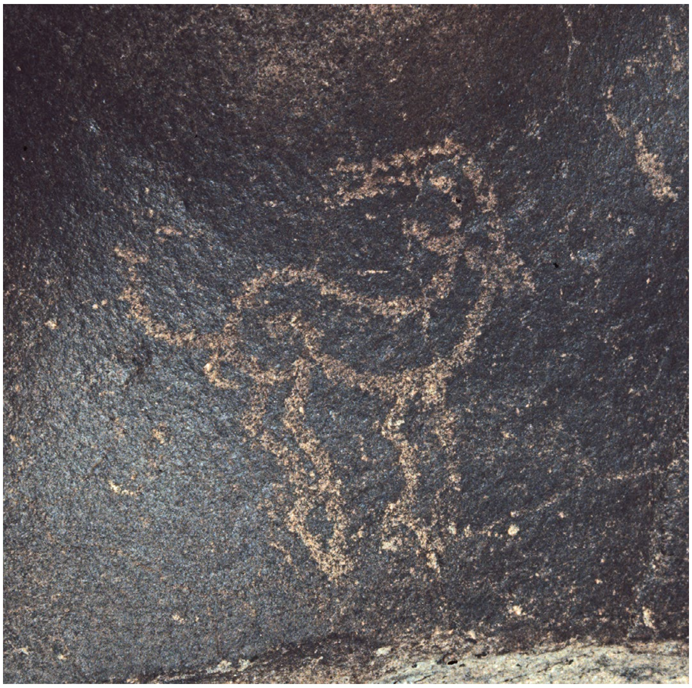
11.1 Caprine chased by a predator; Eurasian Animal Style, Chilas Bridge.



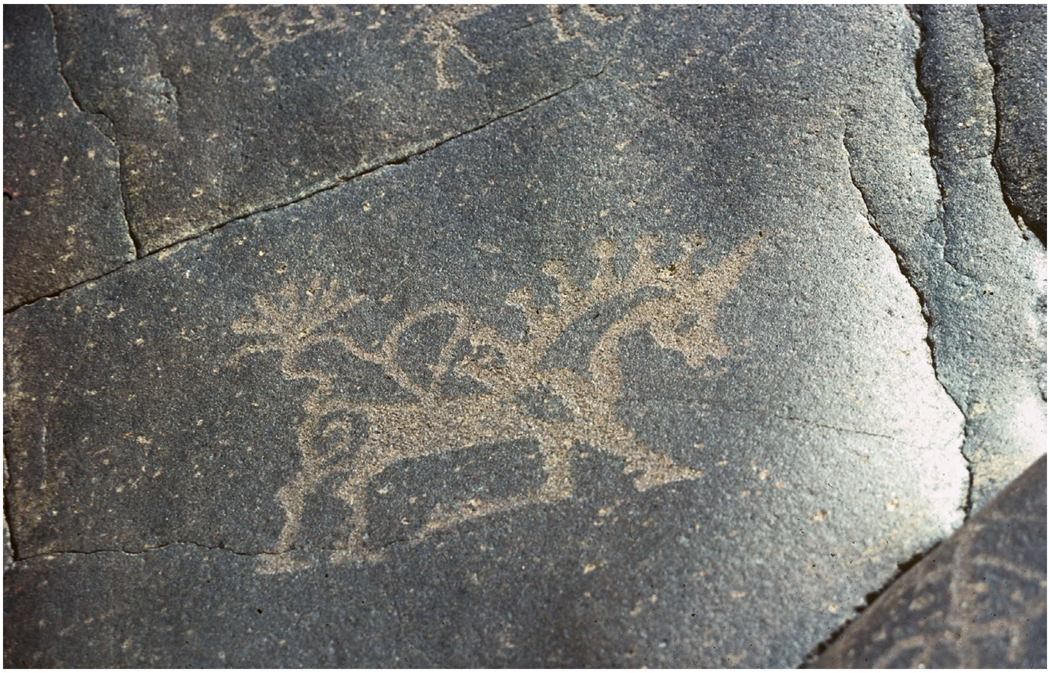
11.2 Double-tailed Predator, Eurasian Animal Style, Dadam Das.



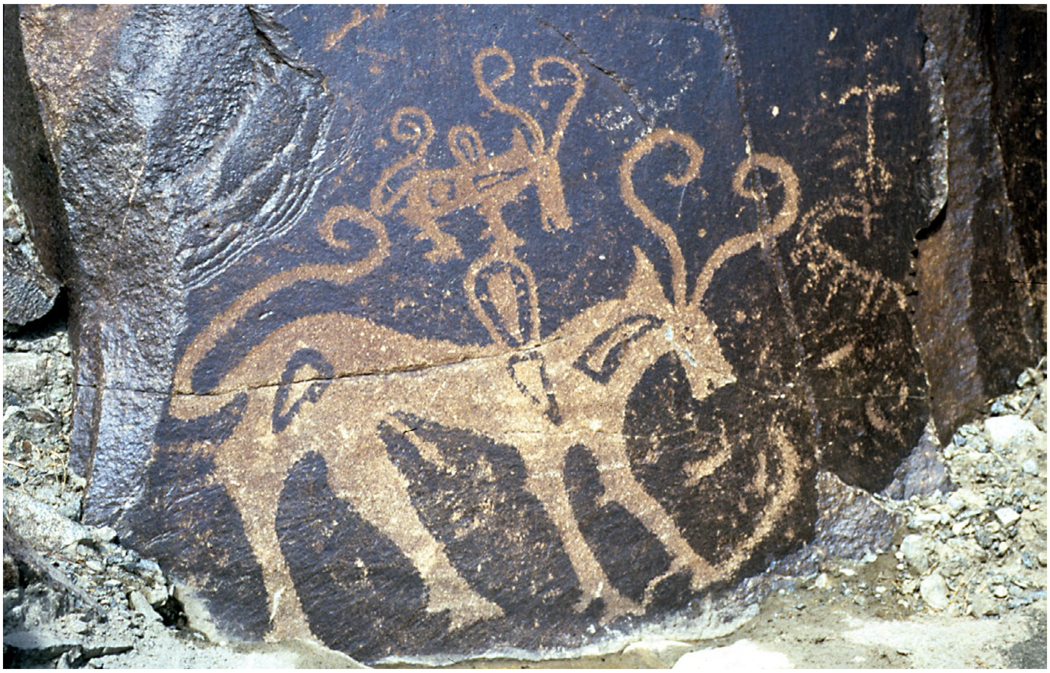
12.1 Caprine chased by a double-tailed predador with two snakes; Eurasian Animal Style. On the upper left a kneeling horse in Achaemenid Style, Thalpan.



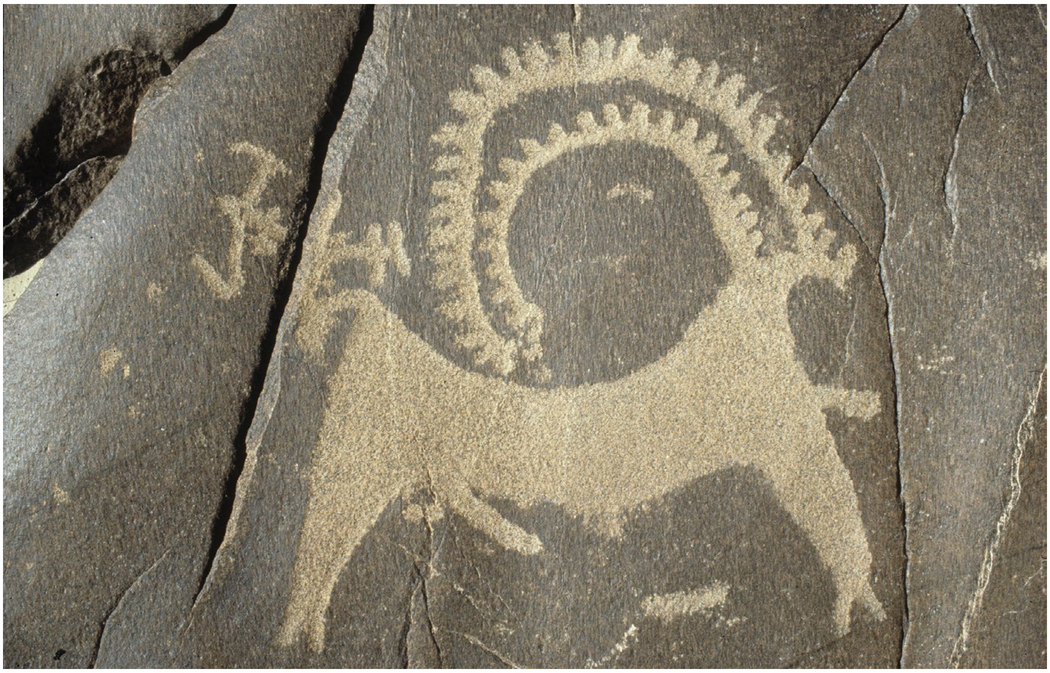
12.2 Caprine; Eurasian Animal Style, Minar Gah.



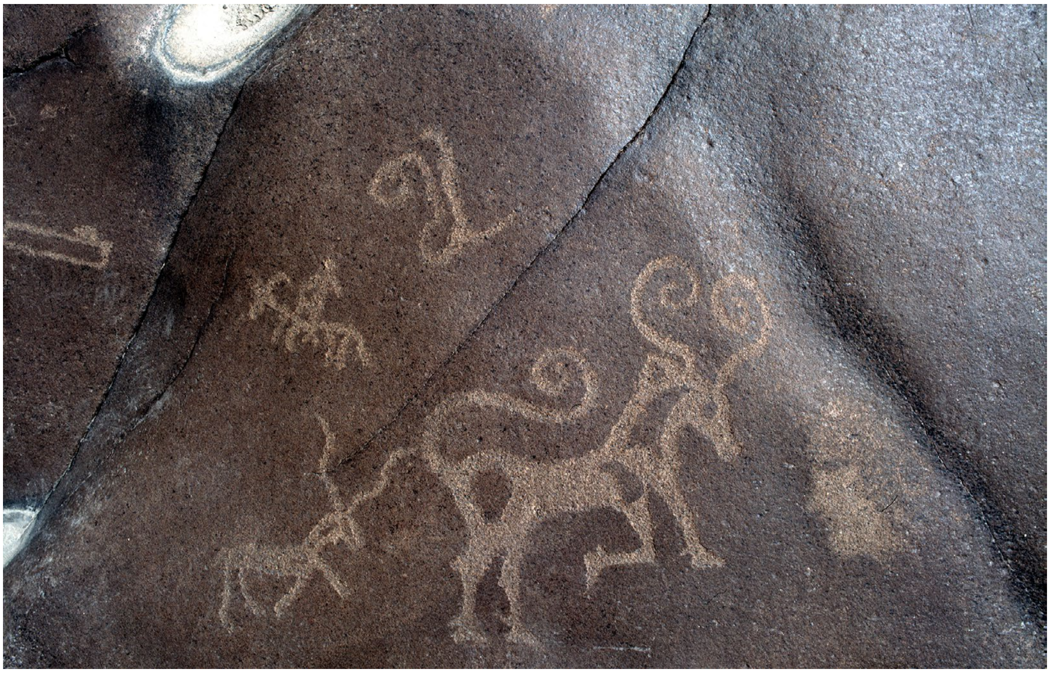
13.1 Kneeling winged horse in Achaemenid Style (cf. Table 12.1), Thalpan.



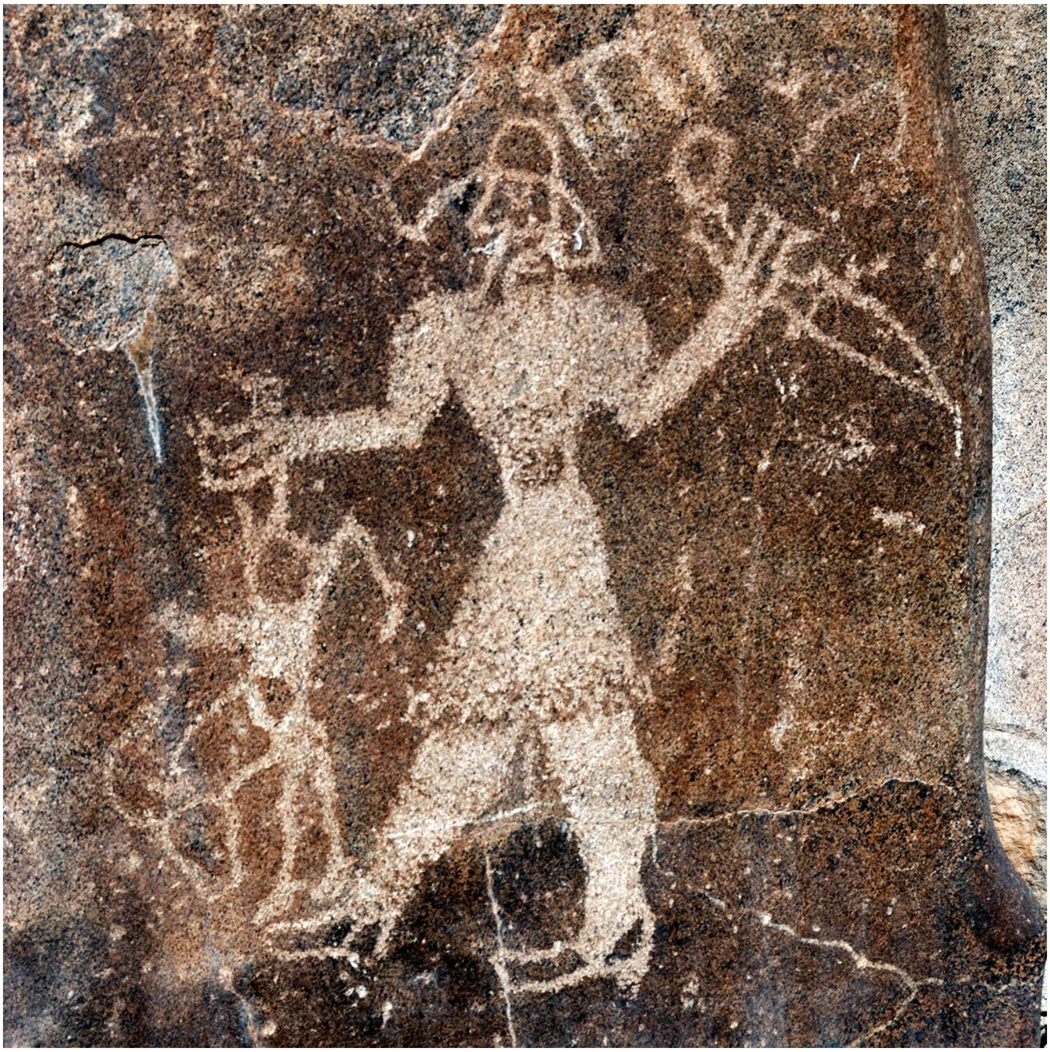
13.2 Winged fabulous beasts in Achaemenid style, Kino Kor Das.



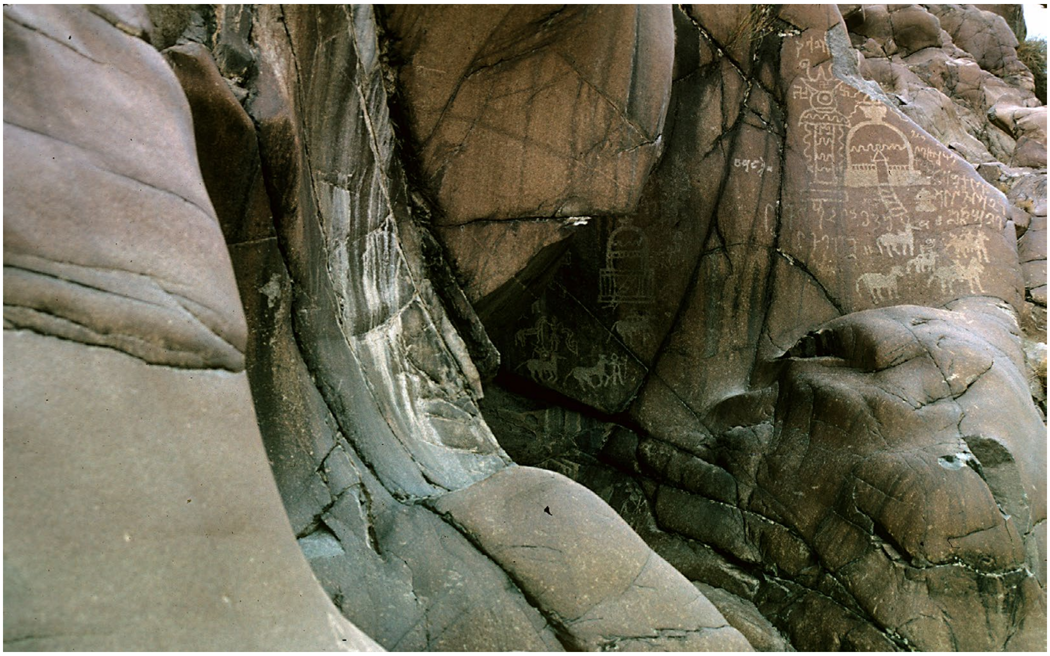
14.1 Ibex chased by a predador; Iron Age, Chilas IV.



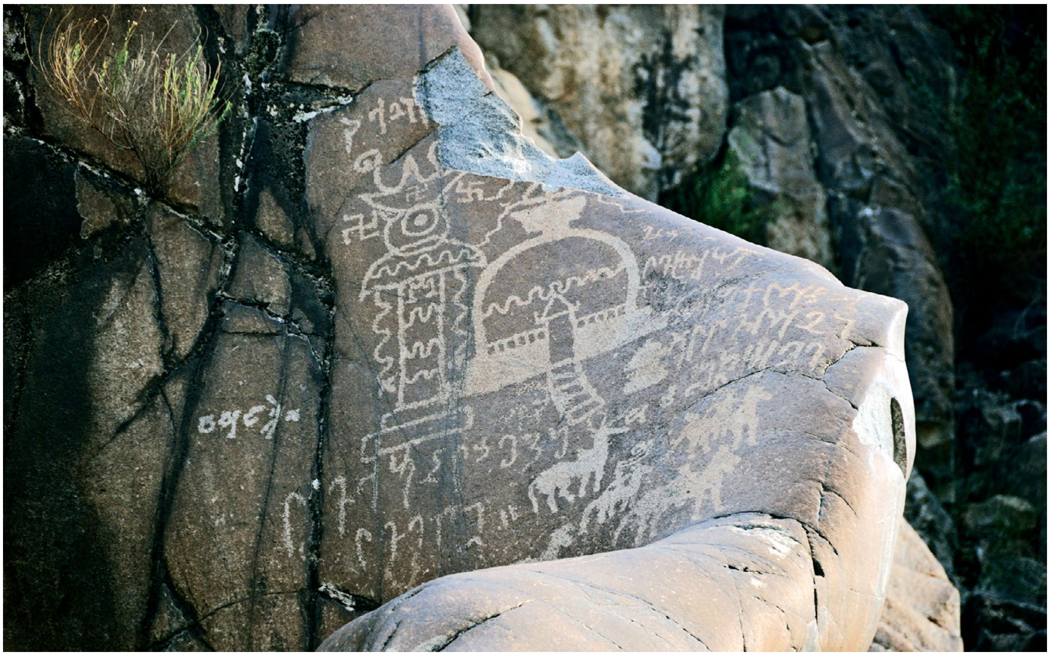
14.2 Kneeling fabulous beast; Achaemenid Style, Thalpan.



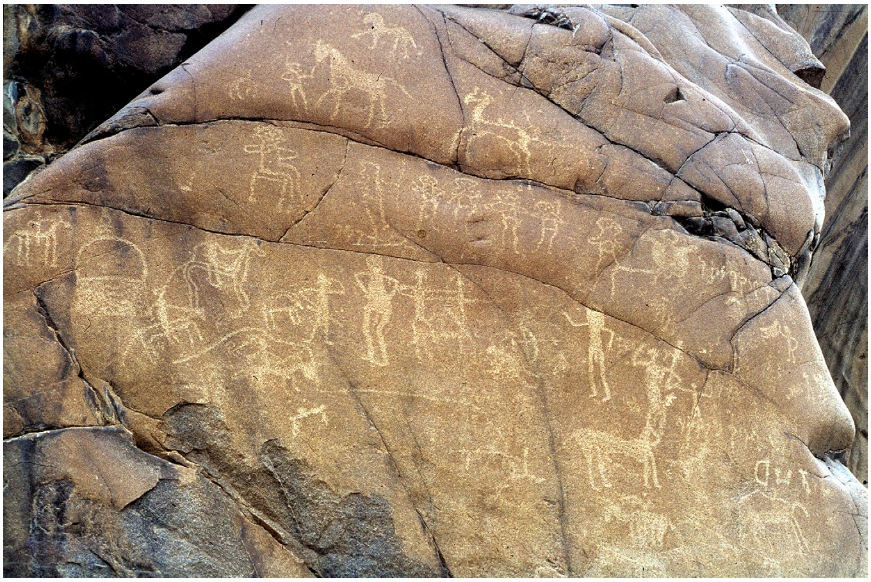
Persian man in Median dress, sacrificing a goat; Iron Age, Thalpan.



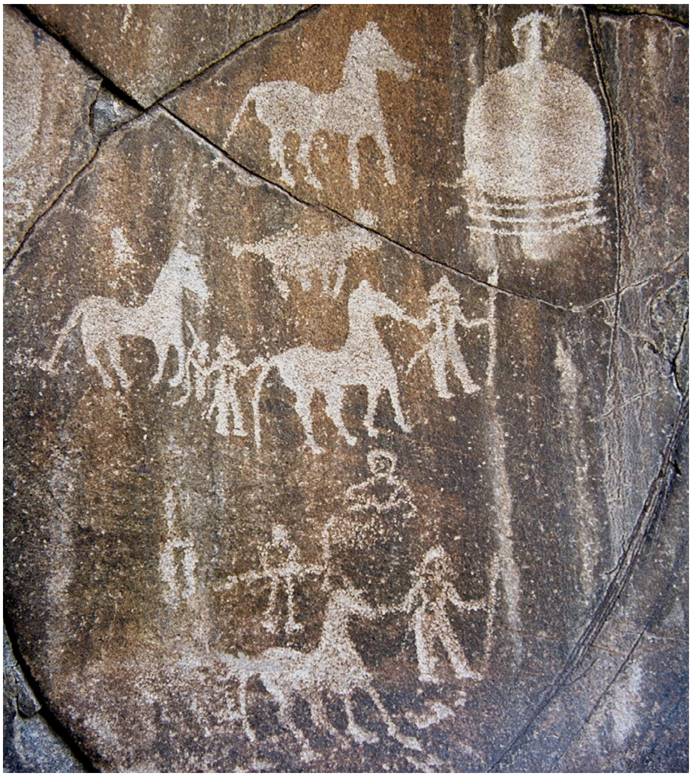
16.1 Horsemen approaching a Buddhist stupa sanctuary accompanied by several Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions; early Buddhist Period, Chilas II.



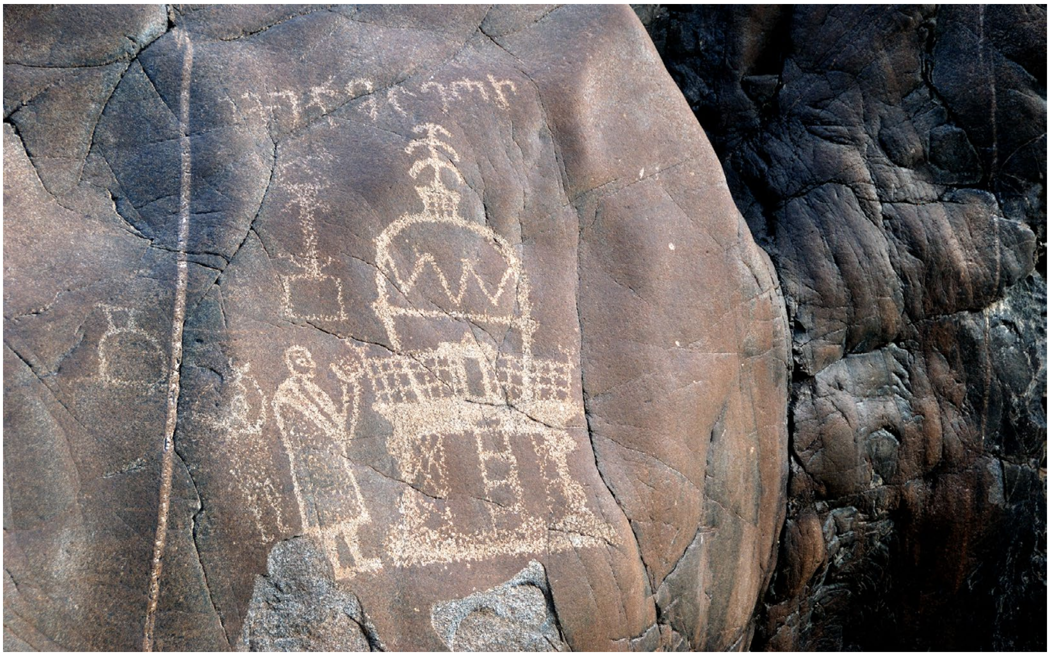
16.2 Detail of Table 16.1.



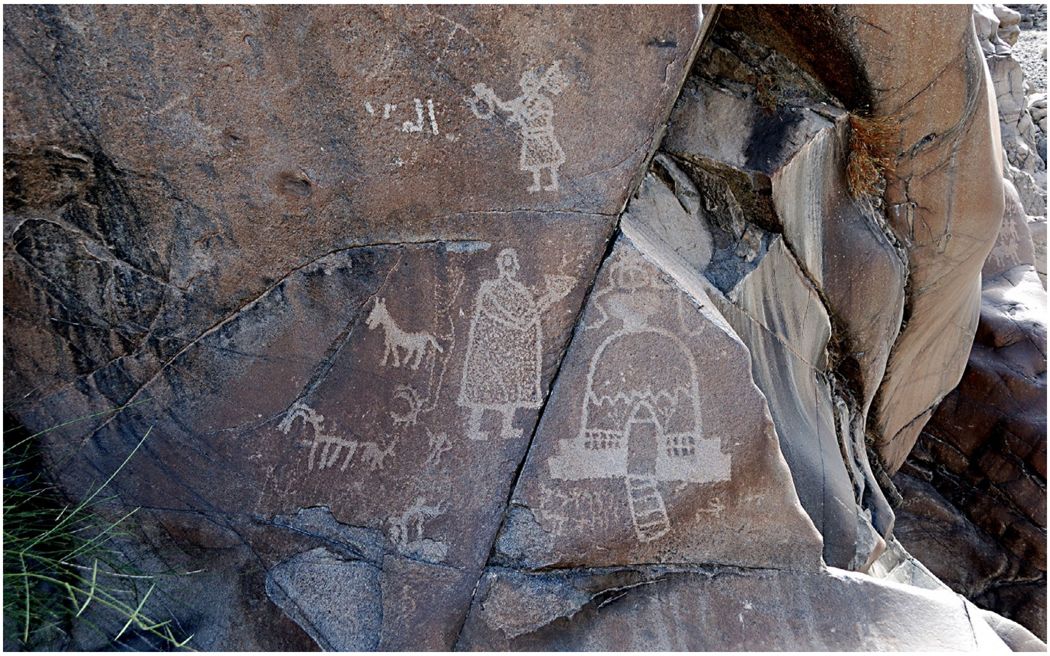
17.1 Early Buddhist carvings in several registers including a courtish scene in the center, Chilas II.



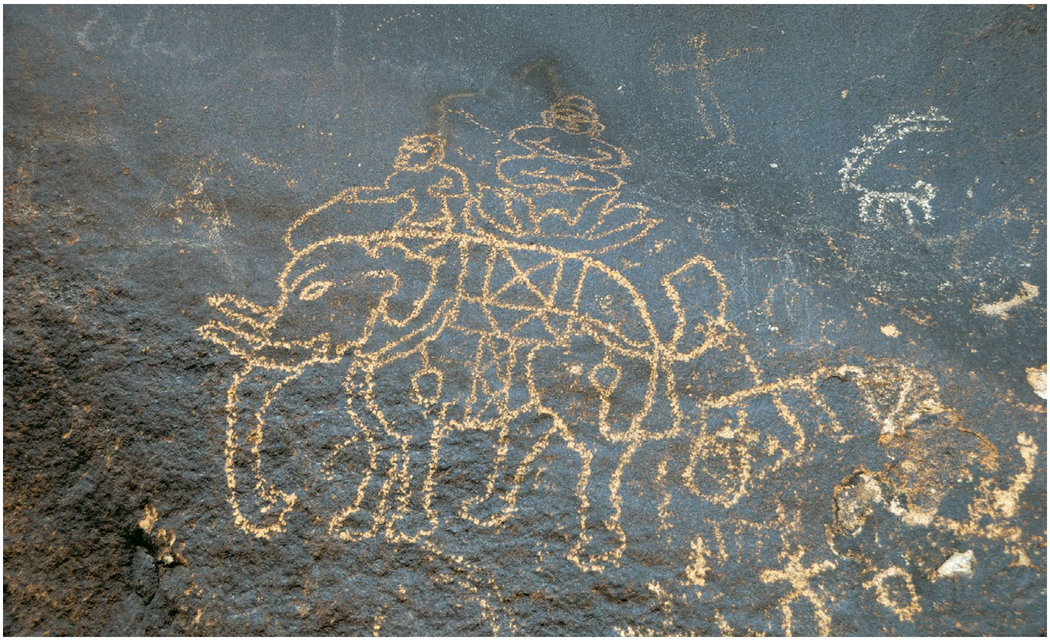
17.2 Horsemen in Kuṣāṇa dress approaching a Buddhist stupa sanctuary; detail of Table 16.1, early Buddhist Period, Chilas II.



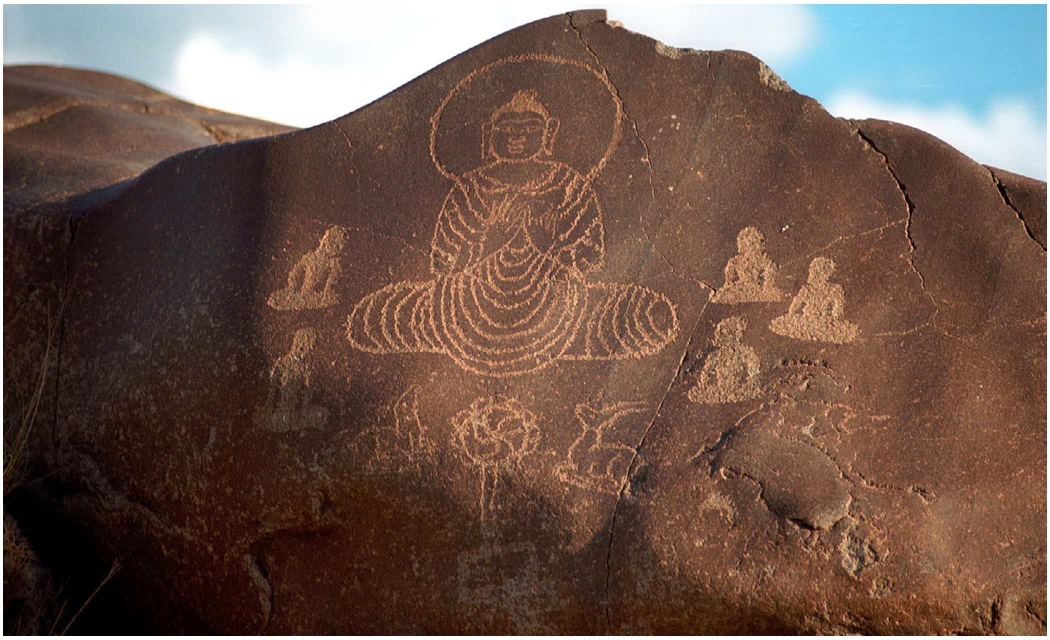
18.1 Two believers venerating a Buddhist stupa, Kharoṣṭhī inscription; early Buddhist period, Chilas II.



18.2 Man with flask and banner, another man with an incense burner venerating a Buddhist stupa; early Buddhist period, Chilas II.

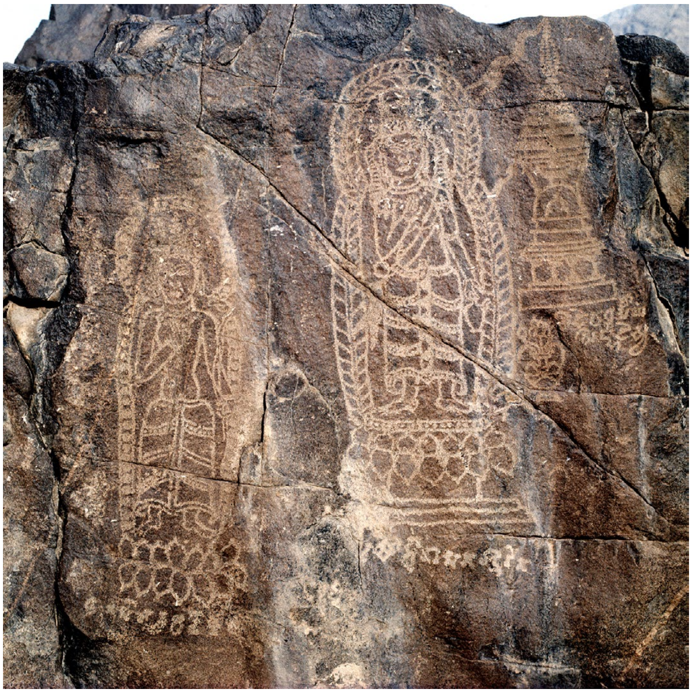


19.1 Adorned elephant carrying a mahout and a Buddha statue on a lotos throne; 5th–8th centuries AD, Alam Bridge.

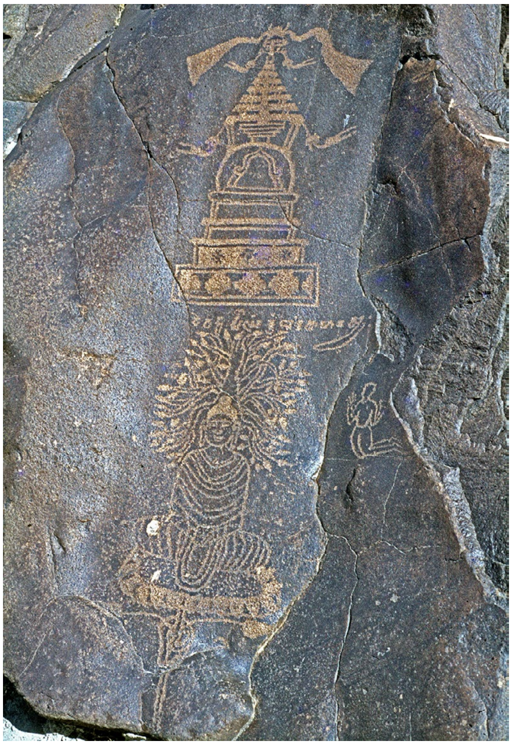


19.2 Buddha's first sermon in the deer park of Benares, surrounded by five disciples, two caprines and the Wheel of the Law; 5th–8th centuries AD, Thalpan.

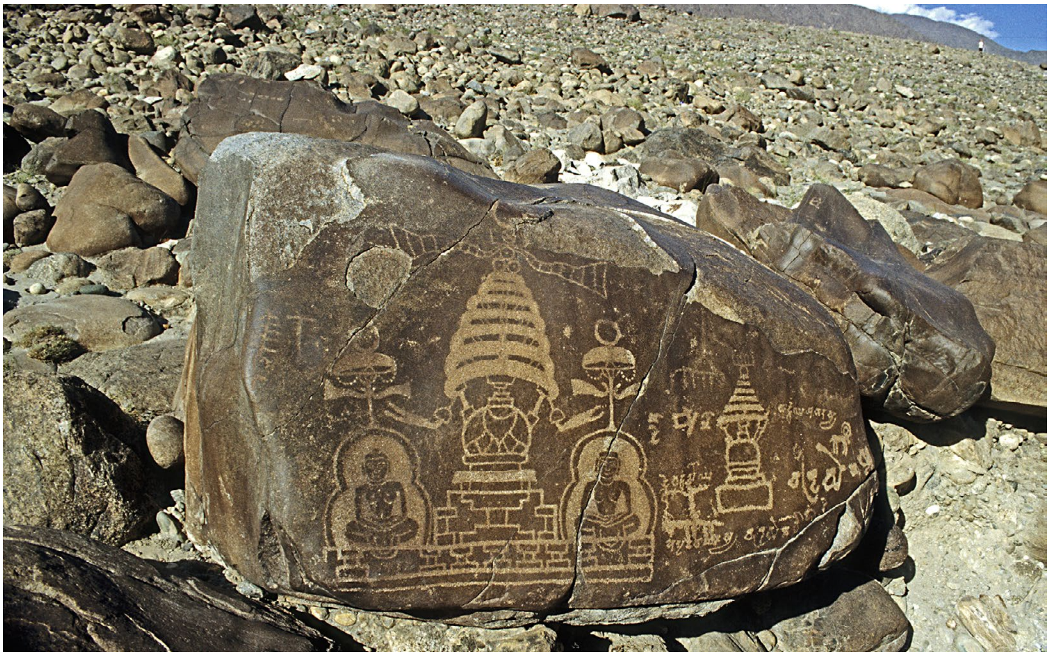
Table 20



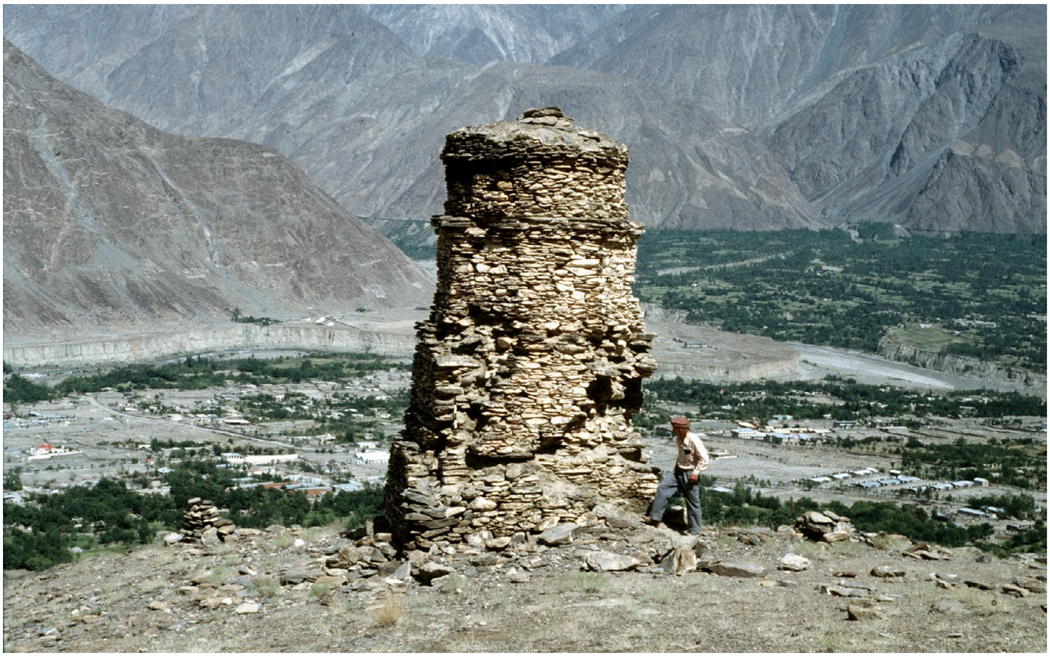
20.1 The bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya with a stupa and a vase of plenty; 6th century AD, Chilas Bridge.



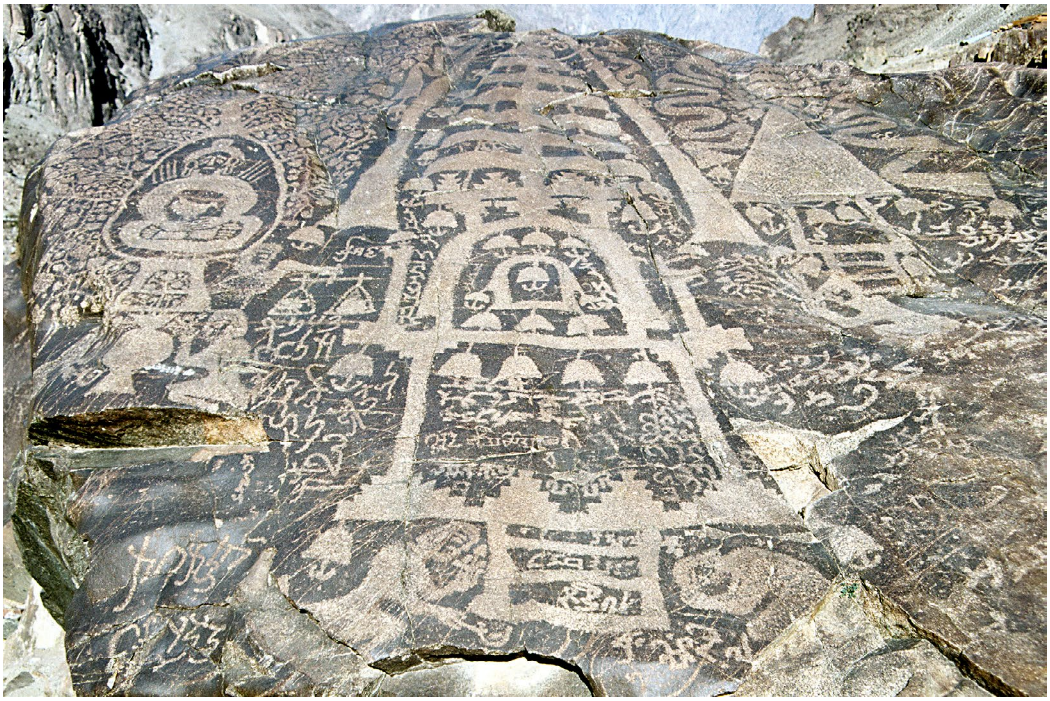
20.2 Buddha seated on a lotos throne under the Bodhi Tree of Enlightenment, above a stupa with dedicatory Brāhmī inscription and an adorant; 6th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



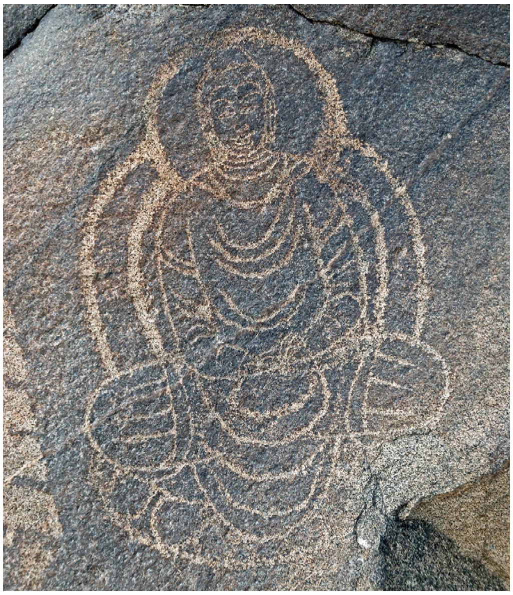
21.1 Scene from the Lotos Sutra showing the Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna on either side of the Jeweled Stupa; 6th–8th centuries AD, Hodar [Hodur] West.



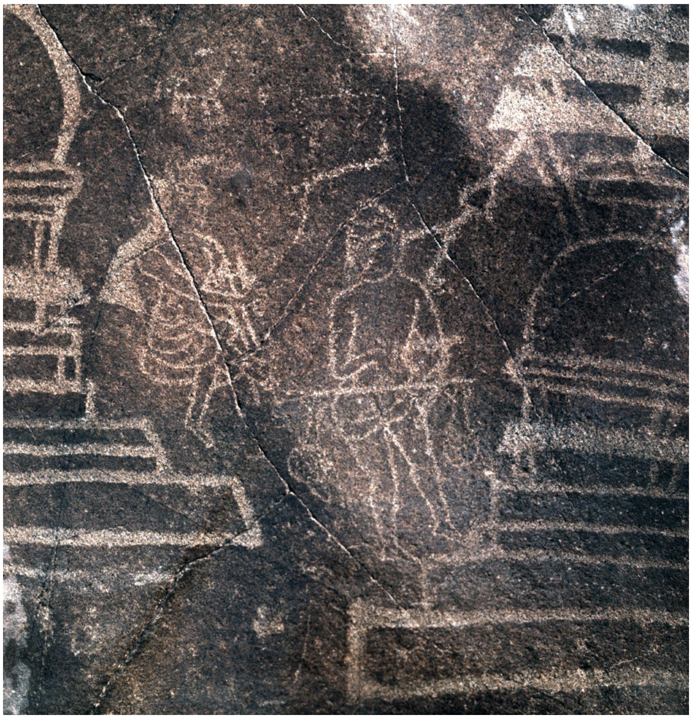
21.2 The stupa above Gilgit-Jutial known as the “Minar of Taj Moghul”; 6th–8th centuries AD.



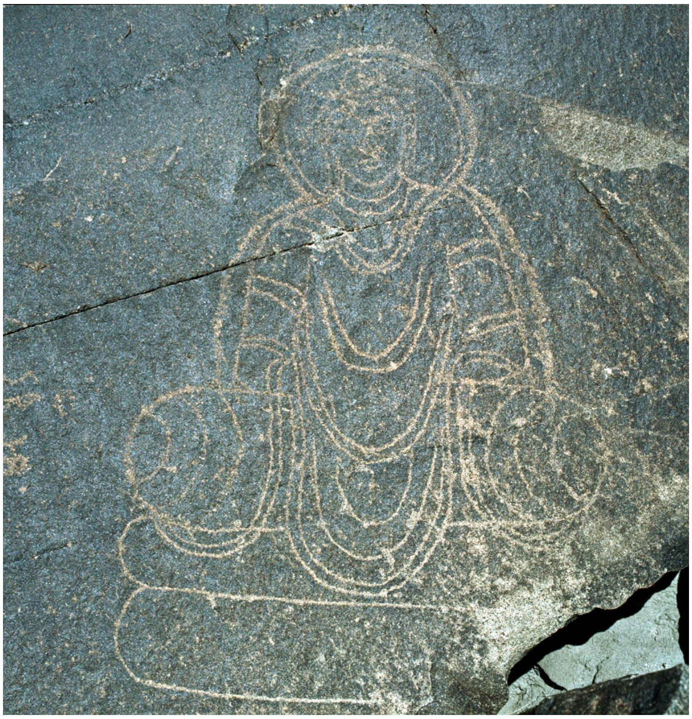
22.1 Huge boulder covered with Buddhist carvings showing stupas adorned with bells and banners, venerated by adorants. To the left Buddha Śākyamuni with flaming shoulders under the Bodhi Tree of Enlightenment combined with a scene of the *Śibi Jātaka.* The gaps are filled with inscriptions in Sogdian, Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī; 3rd–4th centuries AD, Shatial.



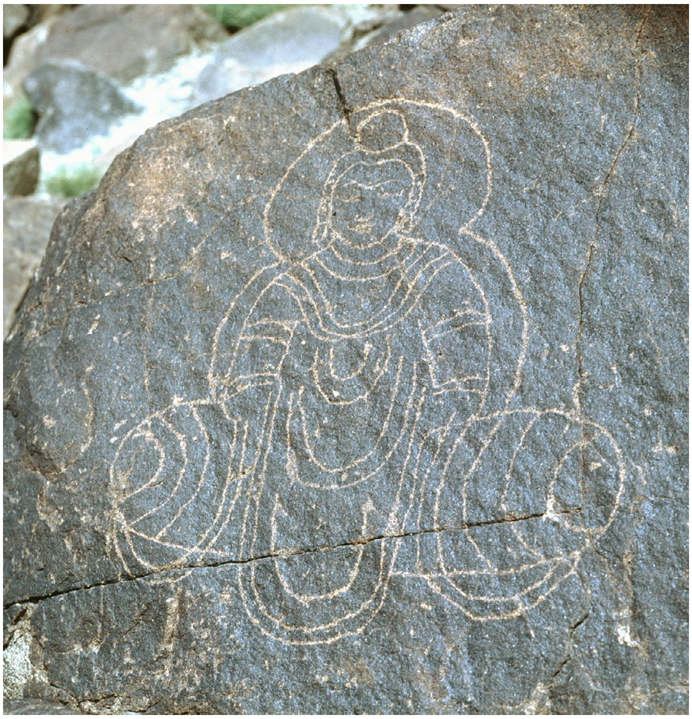
22.2 Buddha sitting on a lotos throne; Gandharan style, 4th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



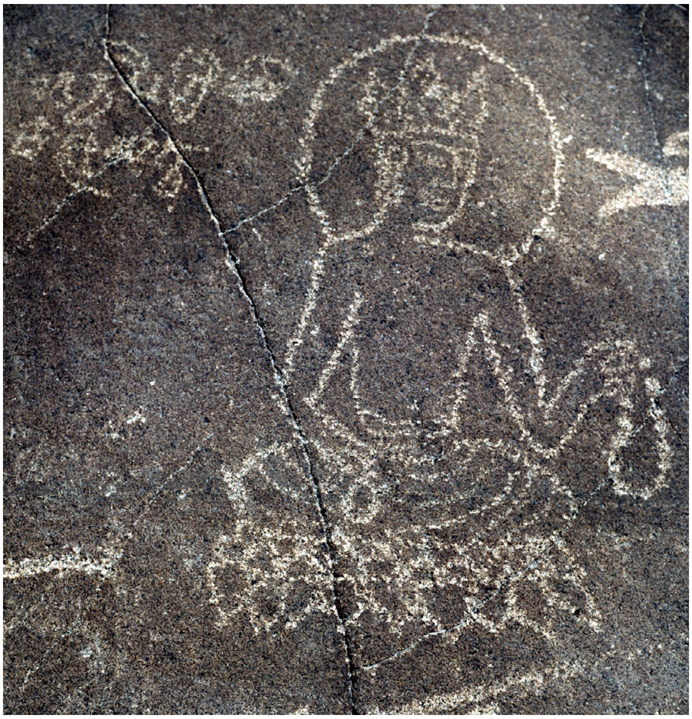
23.1 Another depiction of the *Śibi Jātaka*, showing King Śibi cutting meat from his arm to let it balanced to a dove in order to save its life; 6th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



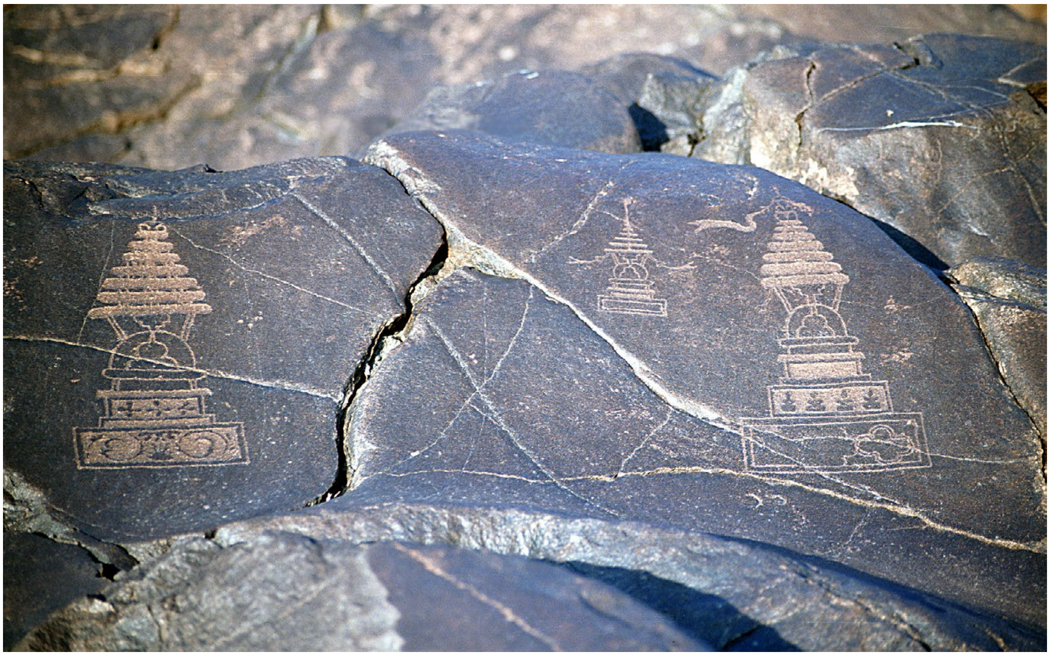
23.2 Buddha sitting on pillows; Gandharan style, 4th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



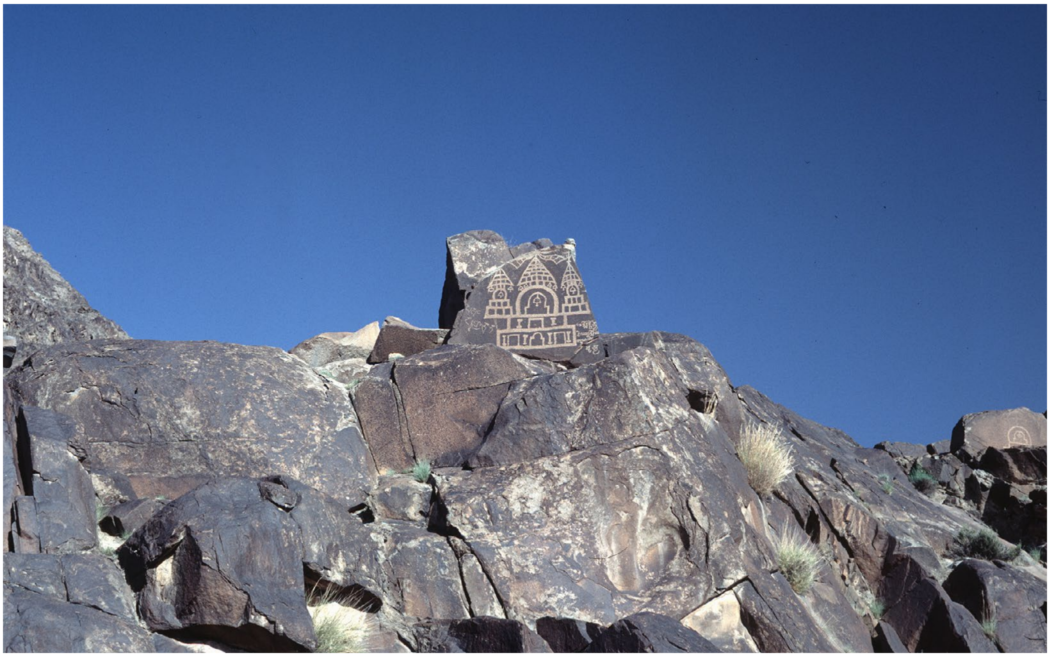
24.1 Seated Buddha in Gandharan style; 4th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



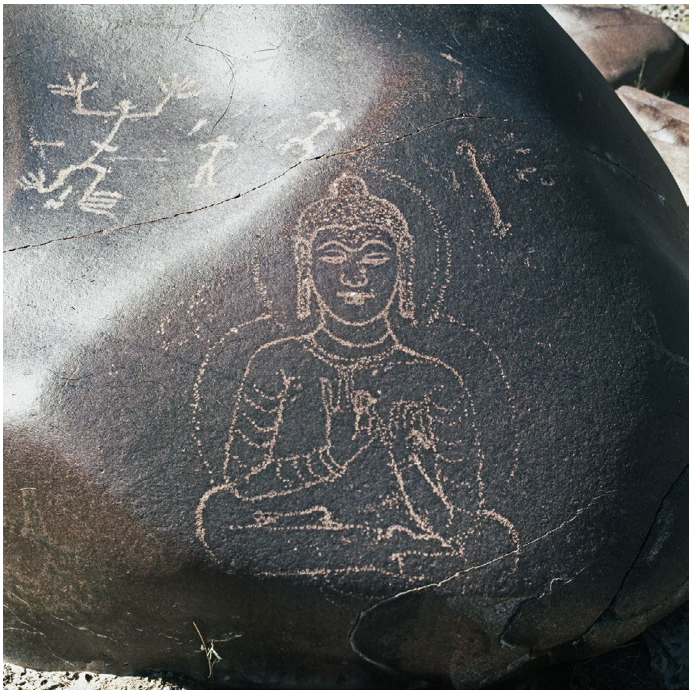
24.2 Bodhisattva Maitreya seated on a lotos throne, holding a flask and a prayer chain in his hands; 6th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



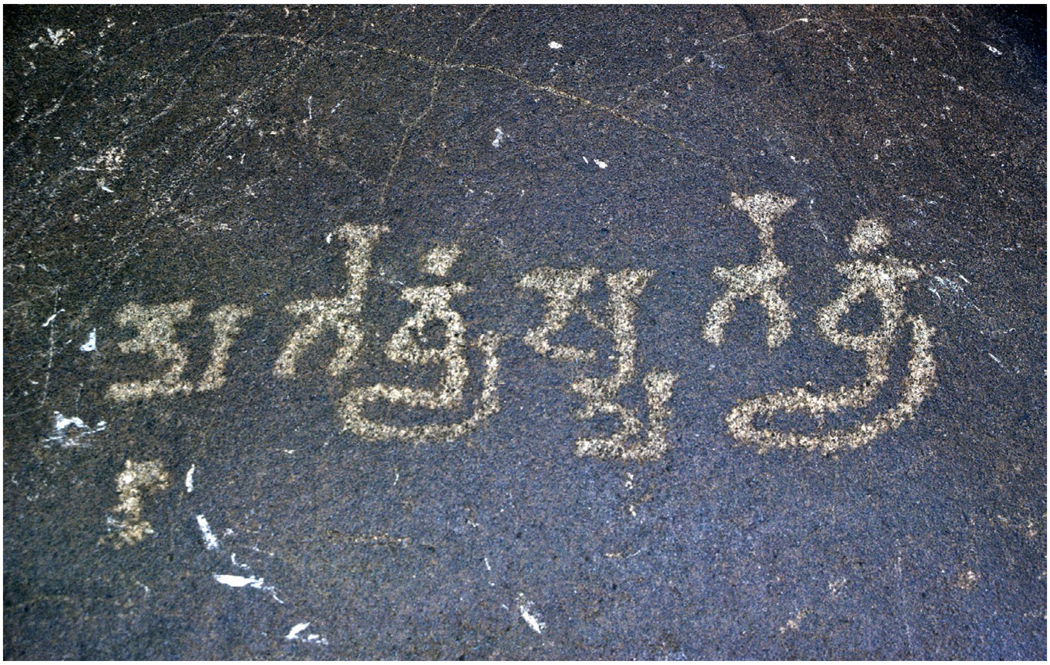
25.1 Delicately executed carvings of Buddhist stupas; 6th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



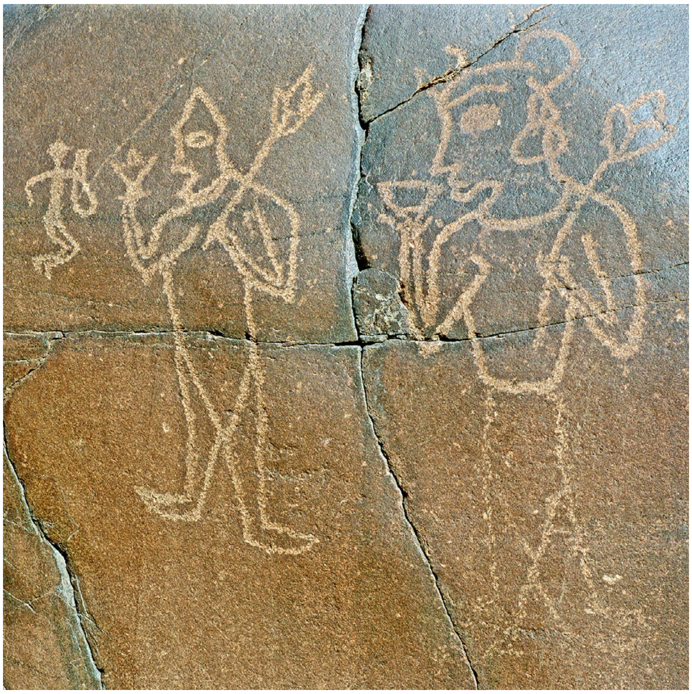
25.2 Ensemble of three stupas decorated with bells, carved on a rock at an exposed position on top of a ridge with dedicatory Brāhmī inscriptions; 6th–7th centuries AD, Thalpan.



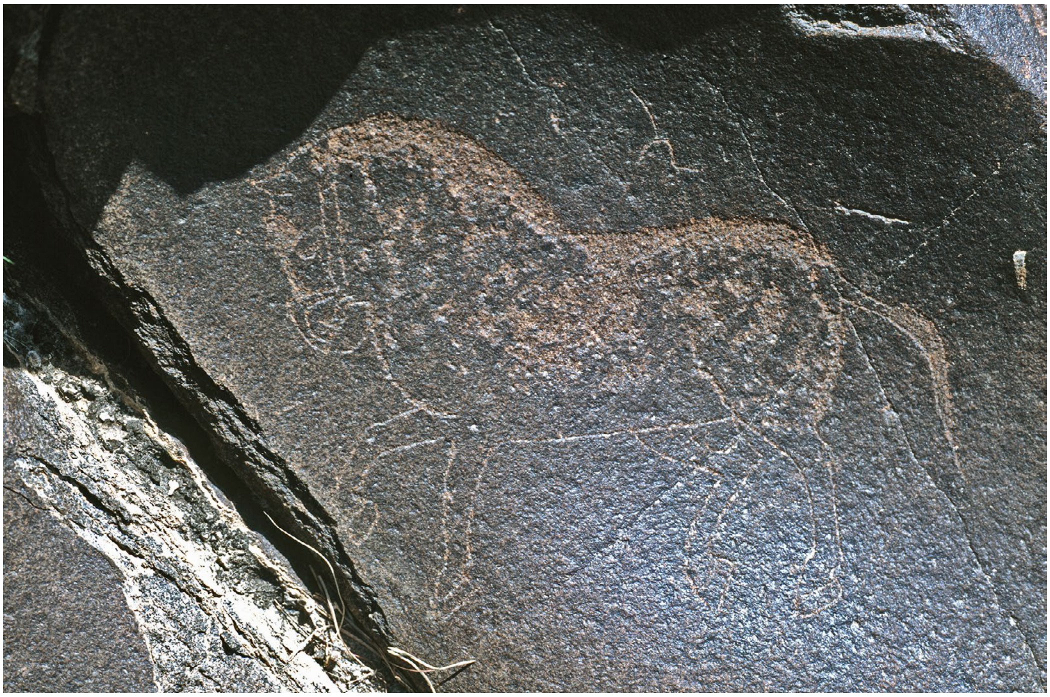
26.1 Buddha with Dharmacakra Mudra; 4th–7th centuries AD, Thor North.



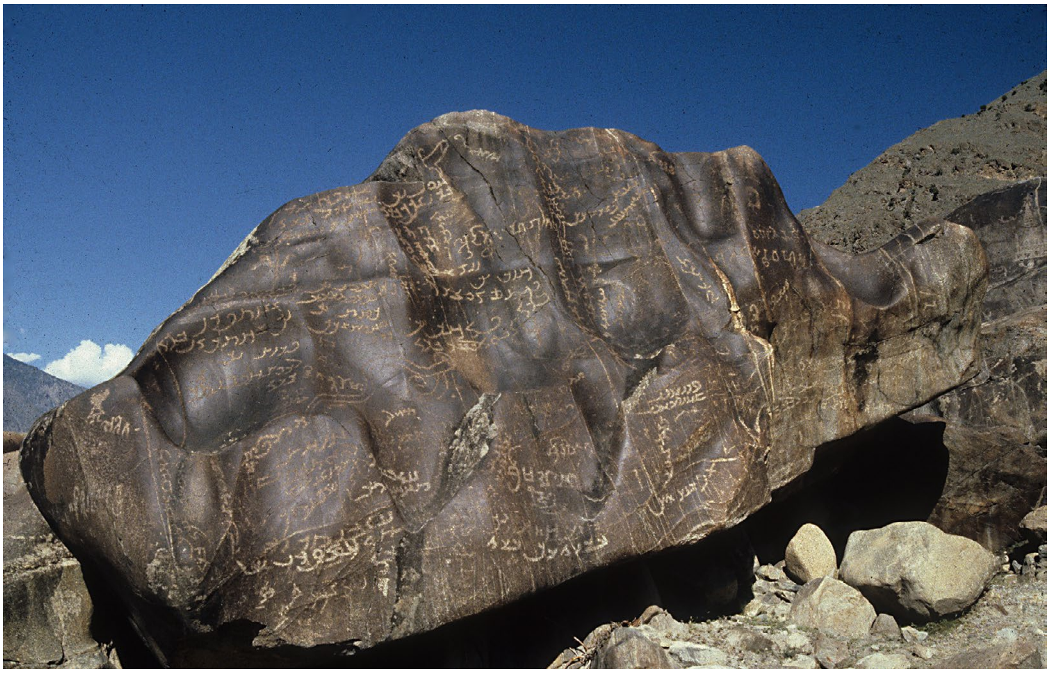
26.2 Brāhmī inscription reading “*martavyaṃ smartavyaṃ*”, equal to the Latin *memento mori*; 4th–5th centuries AD, Oshibat.



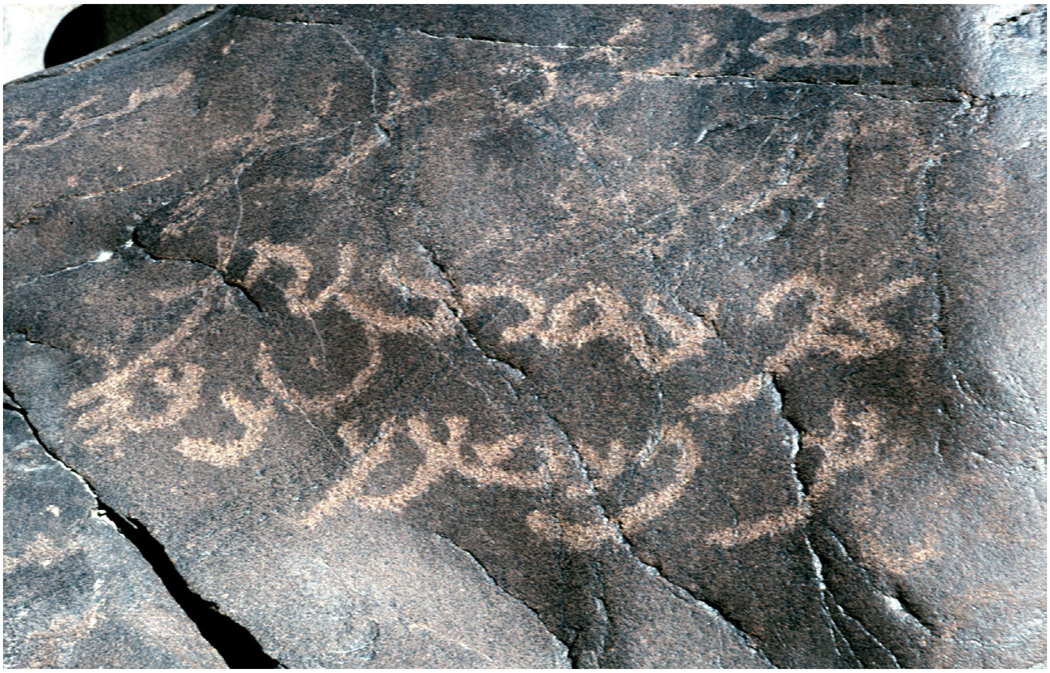
27.1 Two Hunnic noblemen holding a lotos flower in their left and a winecup in their right hands. To the left a servant is holding a wineskin; 5th–6th centuries AD, Dadam Das.



27.2 Horse in pace gait with Sasanian head gear; 5th–6th centuries AD, Thalpan.

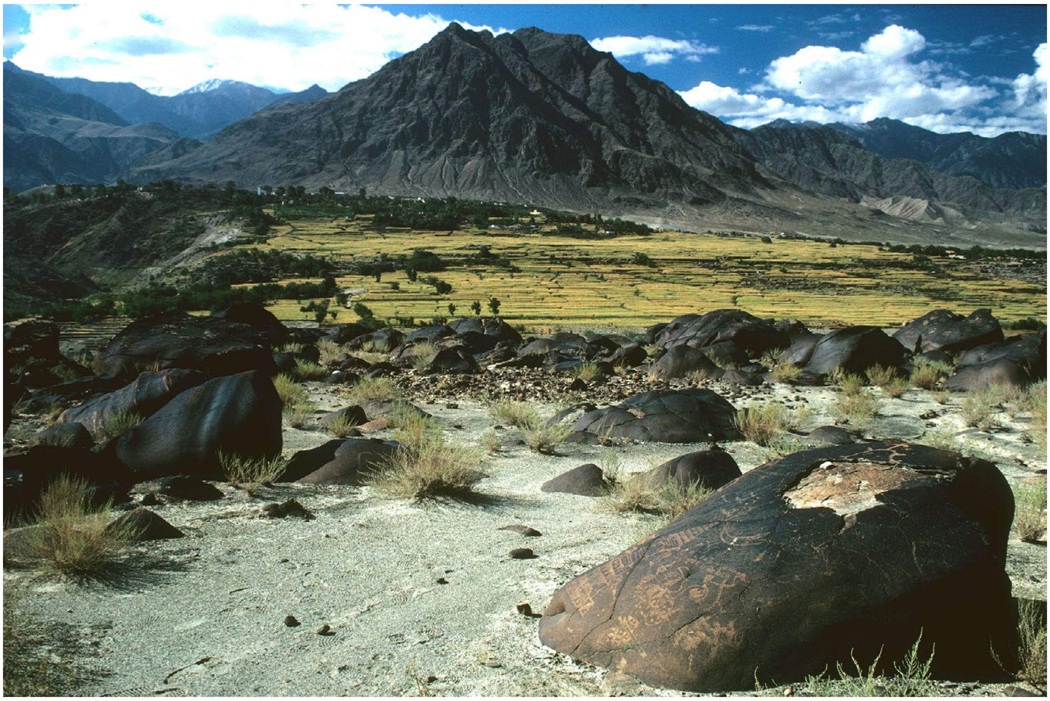


28.1 Large boulder covered with mostly Sogdian inscriptions; 3rd–4th centuries AD, Shatial.

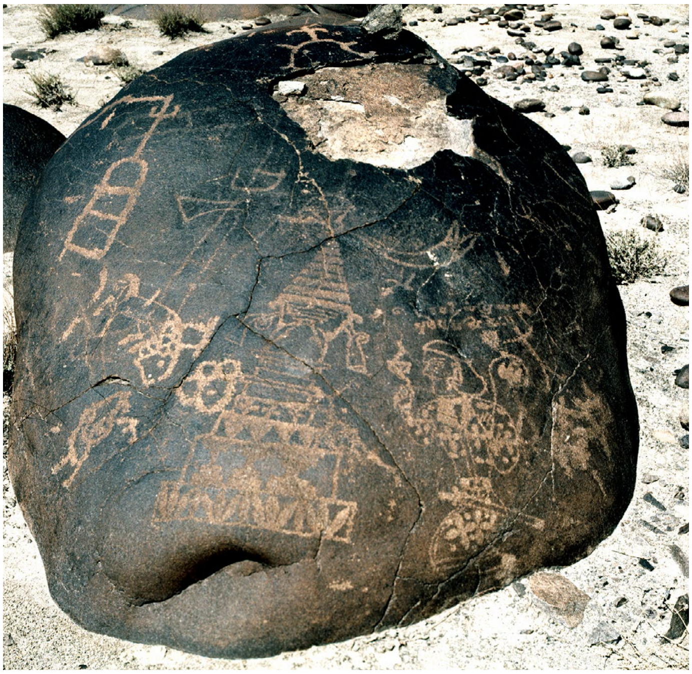


28.2 Sogdian inscriptions with person’s names; 3rd–4th centuries AD, Dadam Das.

1

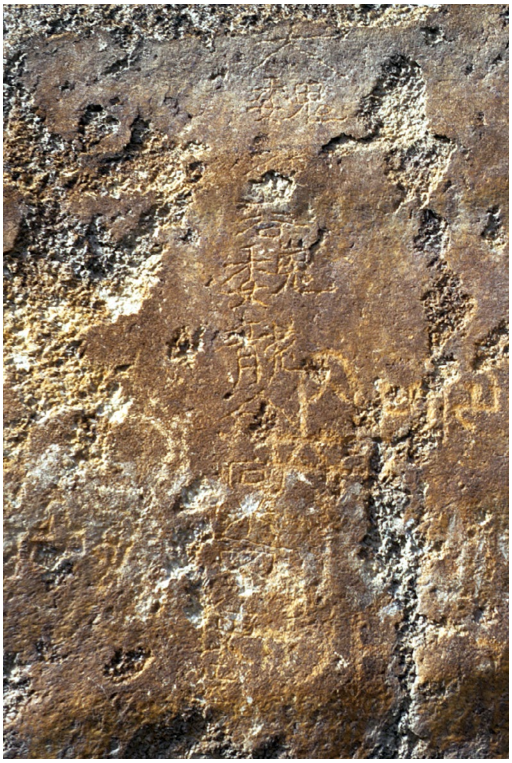


2

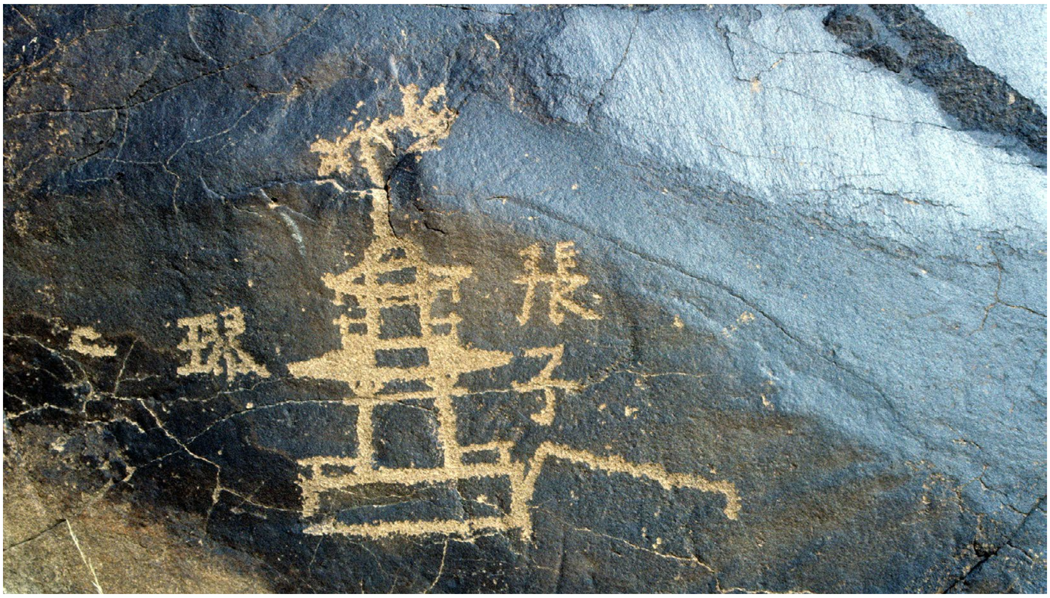


29.1 and 29.2 Man in Central Asian silk costume, holding a lotos flower and an incense burner, venerating a stupa. A Brāhmī inscription above mentions his name: *Dharmasiṃha* son of *Priyananda*; 6th–7th centuries AD, Ziyarat.

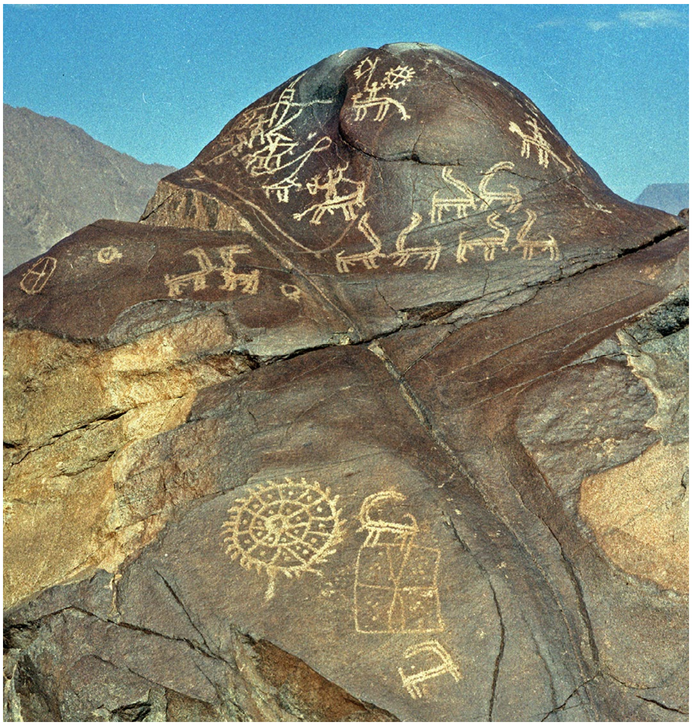
Table 30



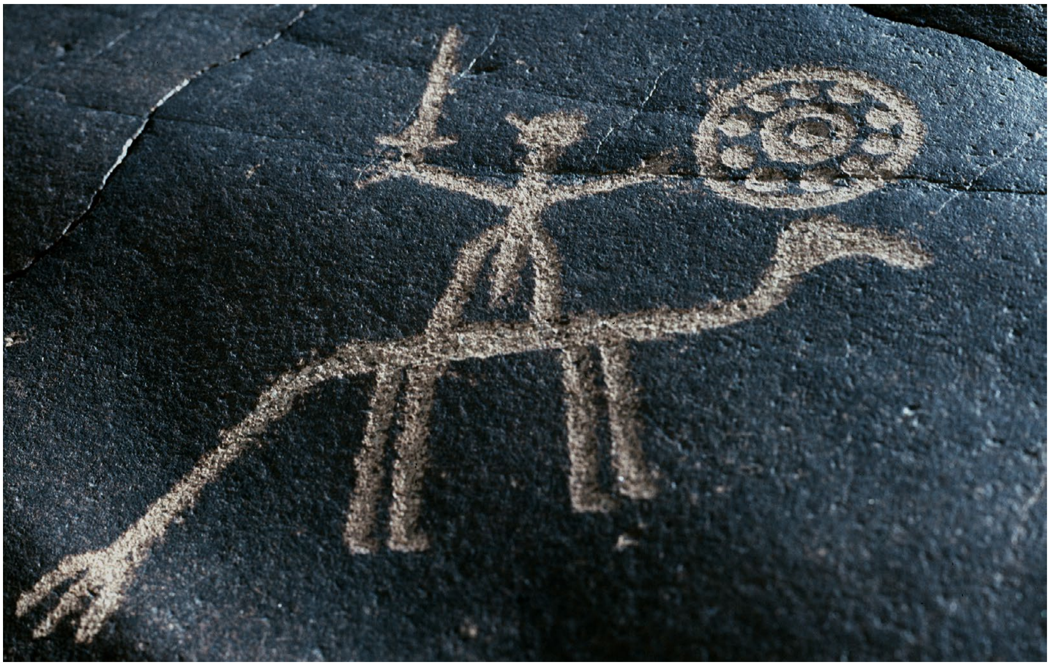
30.1 Chinese inscription mentioning an envoy of the “Great Wei”; 4th–6th centuries AD, Hunza-Haldeikish.



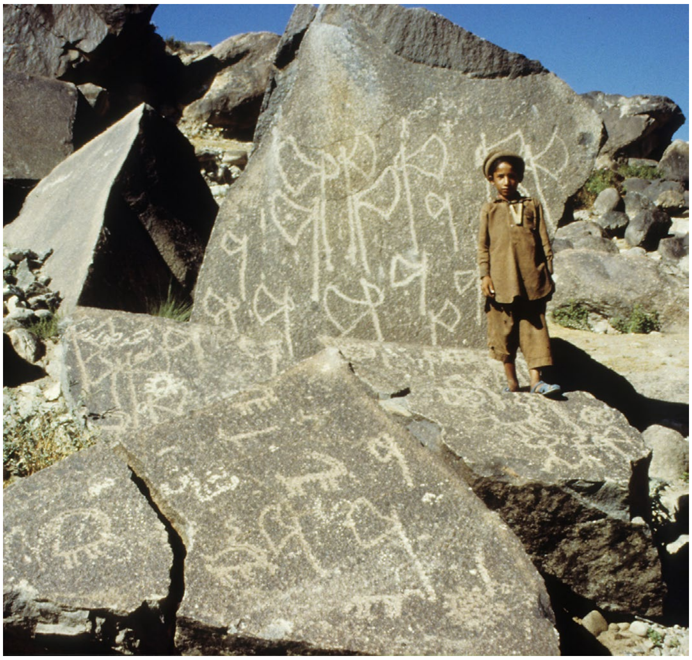
30.2 Pagoda accompanied by some Chinese characters with the name *Zhang Ziqiu*; 6th–8th centuries AD, Thak Gah.



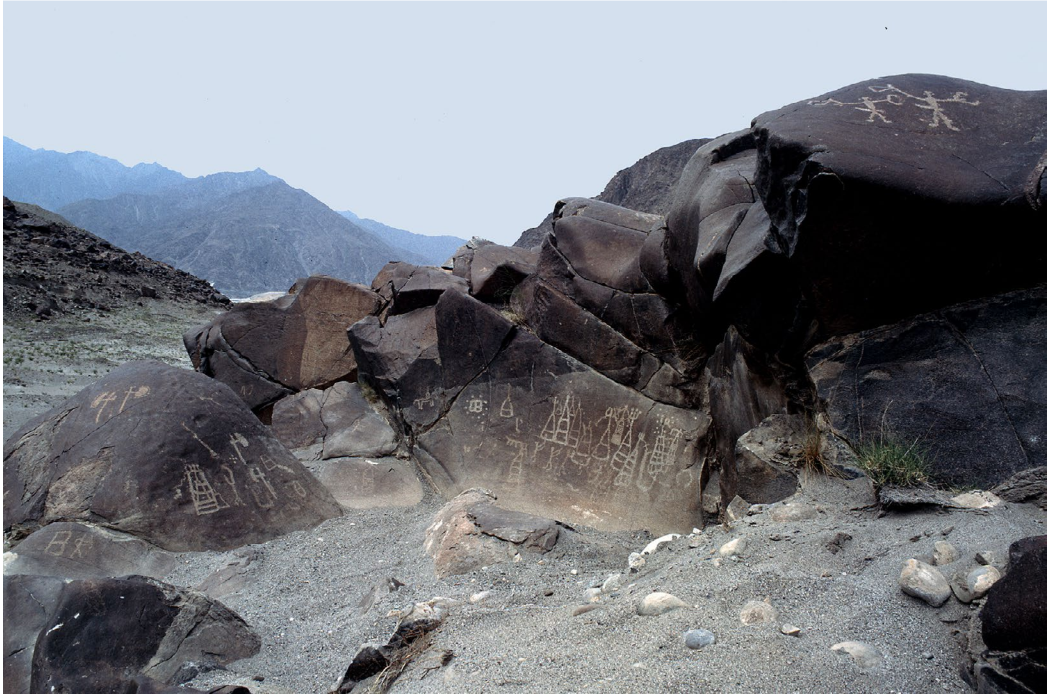
31.1 Ensemble of post-Buddhist carvings showing mounted armed warriors and groups of caprines, Hodar.



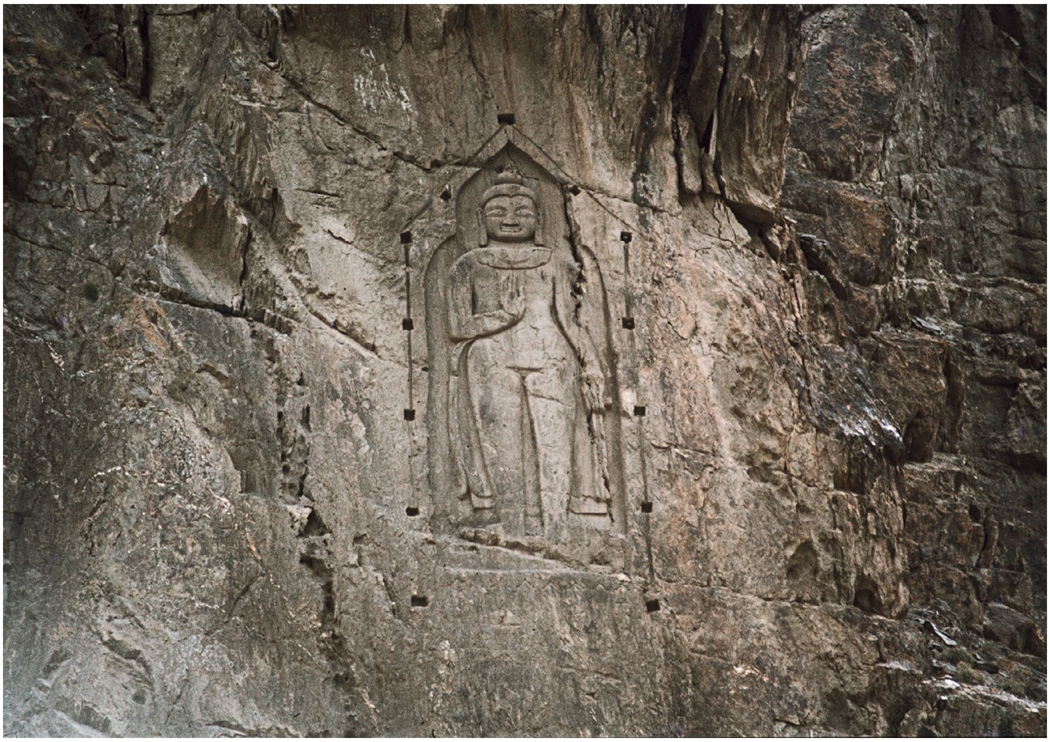
31.2 Mounted warrior with sword and shield; post-Buddhist period, Dadam Das.



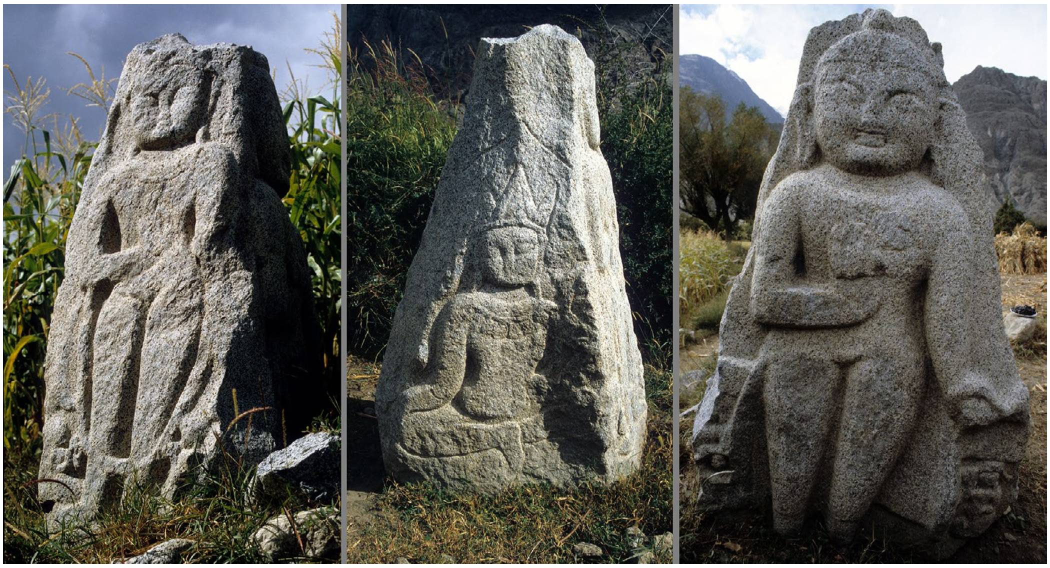
32.1 A cluster of ceremonial axes; post-Buddhist period, Chilas X.



32.2 Group of stupa-like buildings with adorants in front of them. The surrounding rocks show warriors and axes; late- to post-Buddhist periods, Chilas VIII.

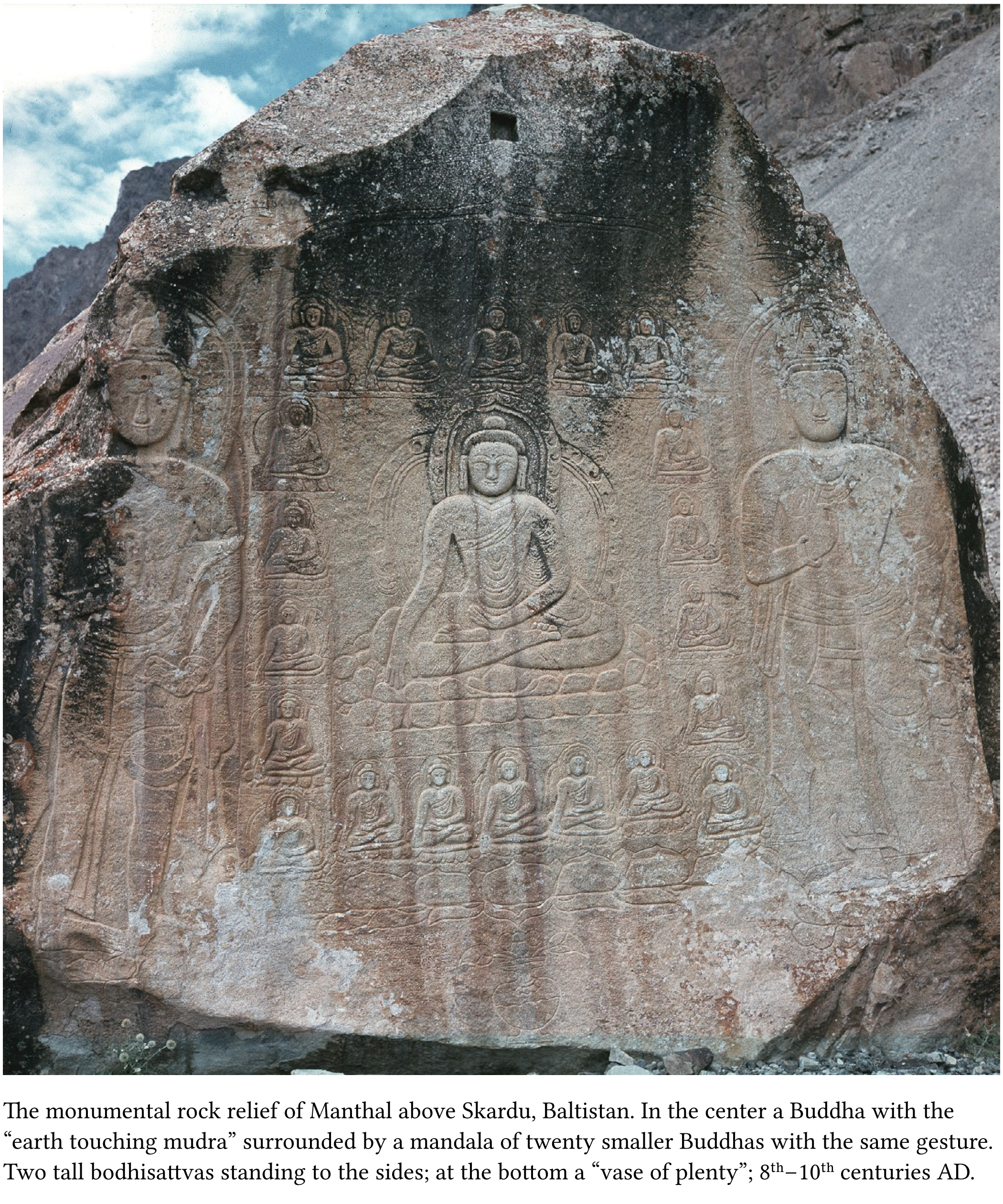


33.1 Relief of Buddha in *abhaya mudrā*; 8th–10th centuries AD, Gilgit Naupura.

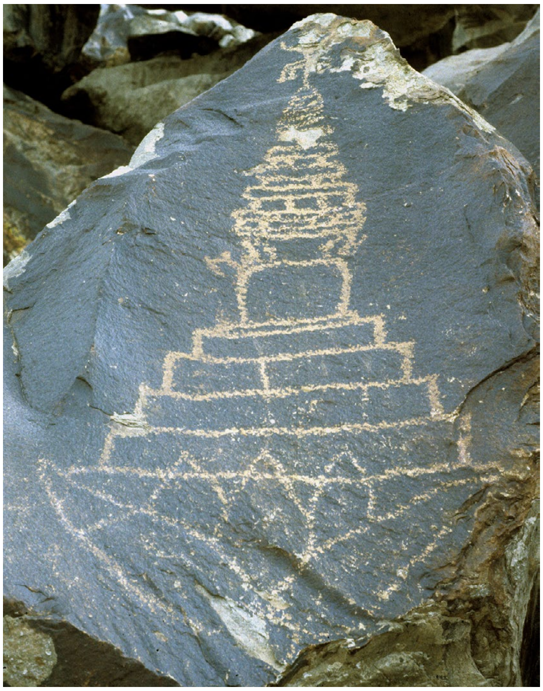


33.2 Three-sided stele with figures of Buddha and bodhisattvas; 8th–10th centuries AD, Bubur, Ghizer valley.

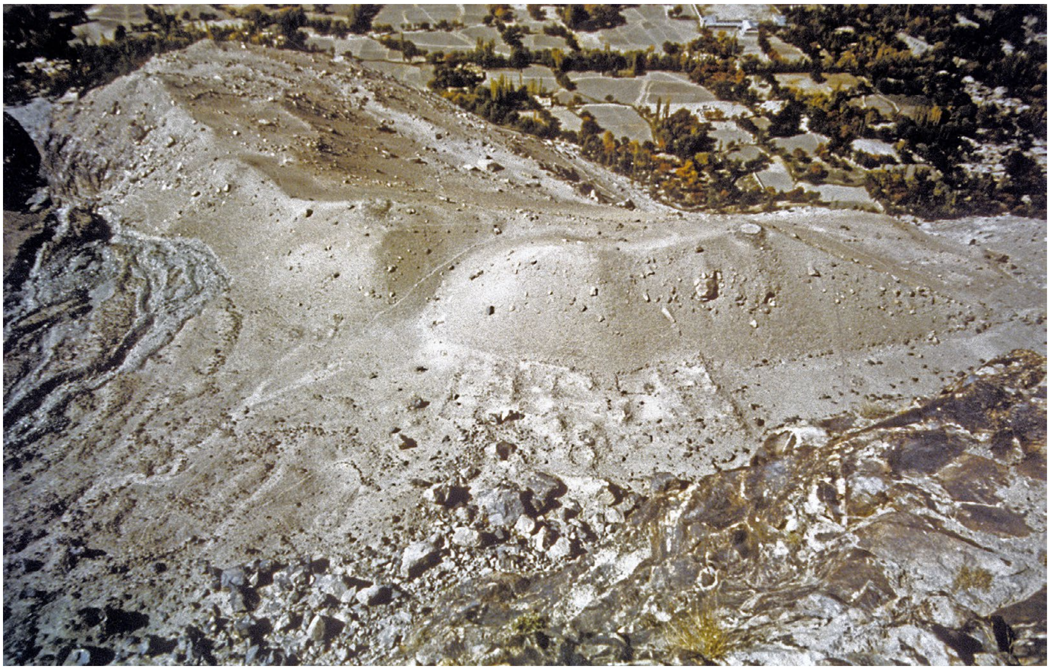
Table 34



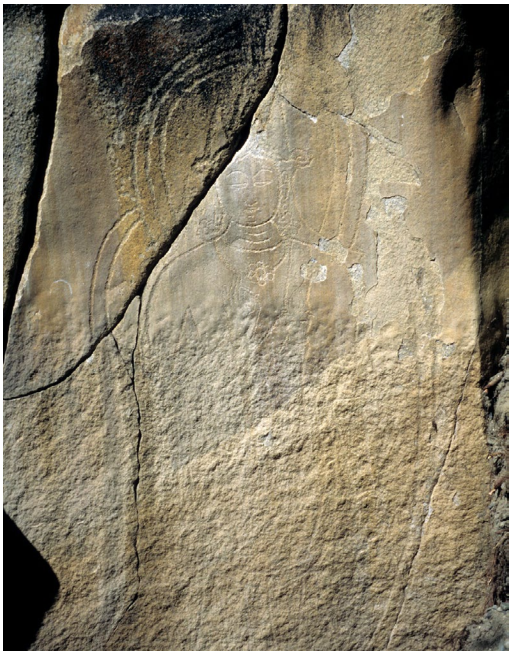
The monumental rock relief of Manthal above Skardu, Baltistan. In the center a Buddha with the "earth touching mudra" surrounded by a mandala of twenty smaller Buddhas with the same gesture. Two tall bodhisattvas standing to the sides; at the bottom a "vase of plenty"; 8th–10th centuries AD.



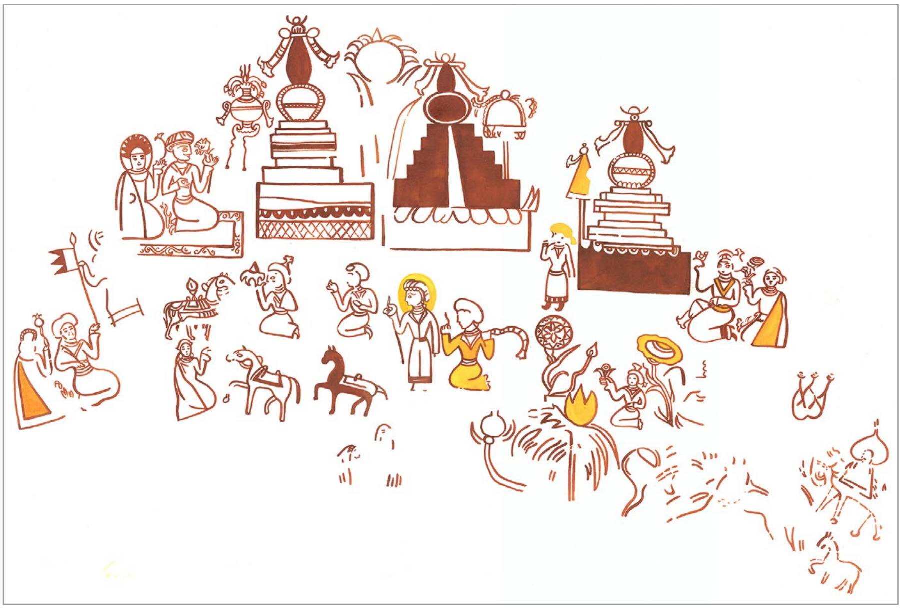
35.1 Stupa of a Tibetan type; 6th–8th centuries AD, from the monastery site of Shigar (Baltistan).



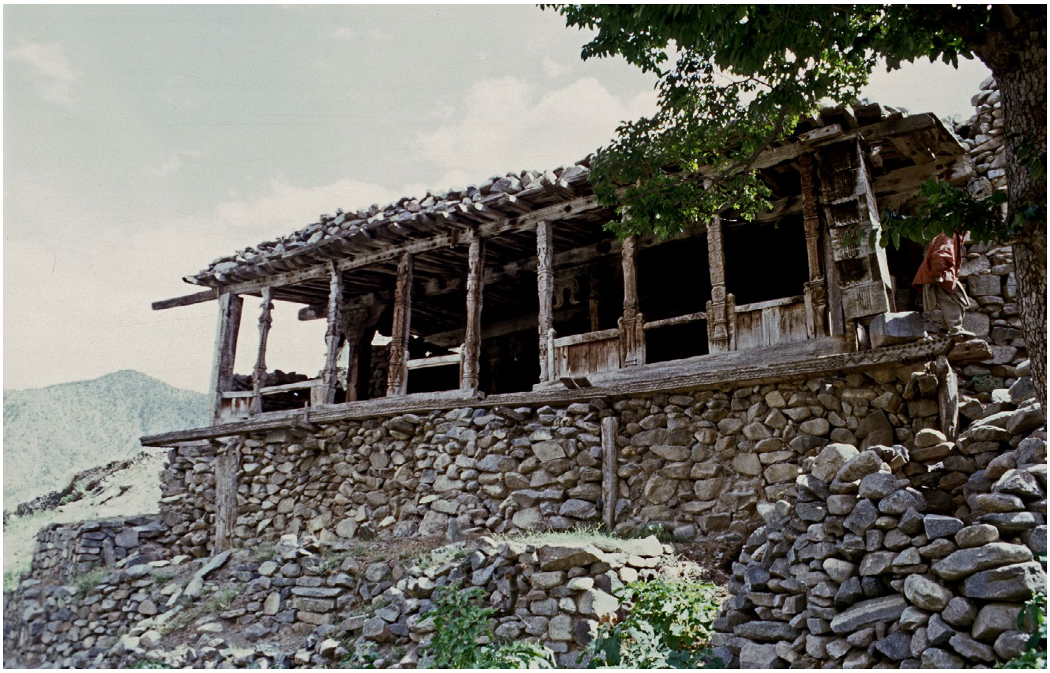
35.2 Aerial view of the monastery site of Shigar with ruins of buildings and stupa bases on top of the hills.



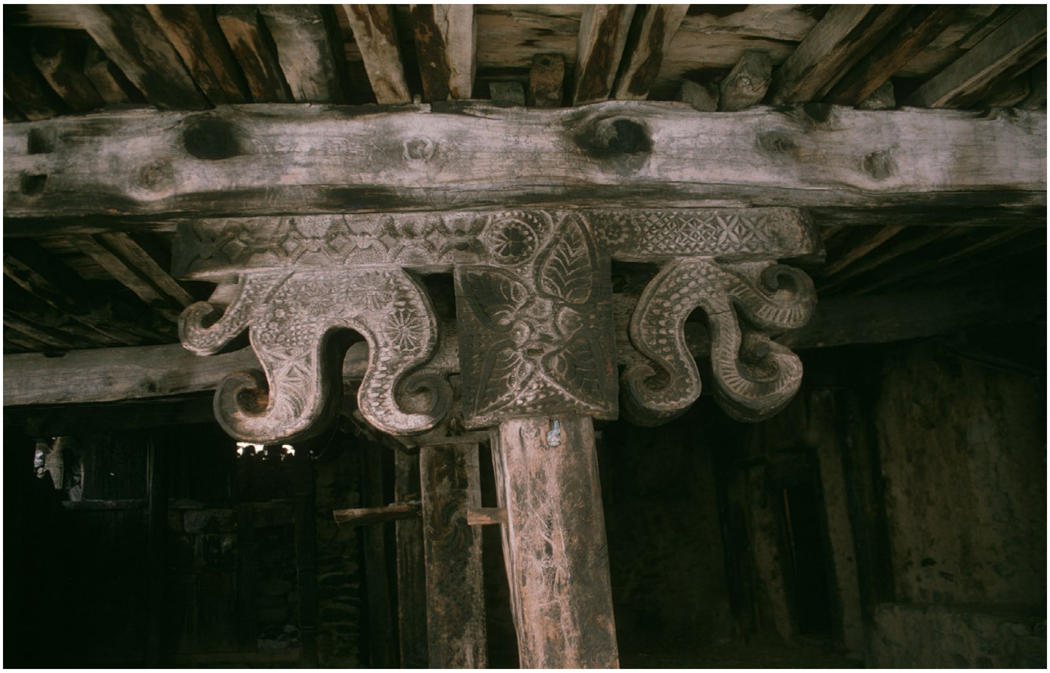
36.1 Image of the bodhisattva Maitreya; 8th–10th centuries AD, Parkuta (Mehdiabad).



36.2 Polychrome fresco on a cliff at Nar (Chaghdo), Baltistan. It shows three stupas of Tibetan type venerated by a group of noble people. To the upper left possibly the local Raja and his wife are kneeling on a carpet, holding a flower in their hands. In the register below the symbols of the “Seven precious possesions of the Cakravartin” are depicted, as the jeweled horse and elephant etc.; latest Buddhist period of Baltistan.

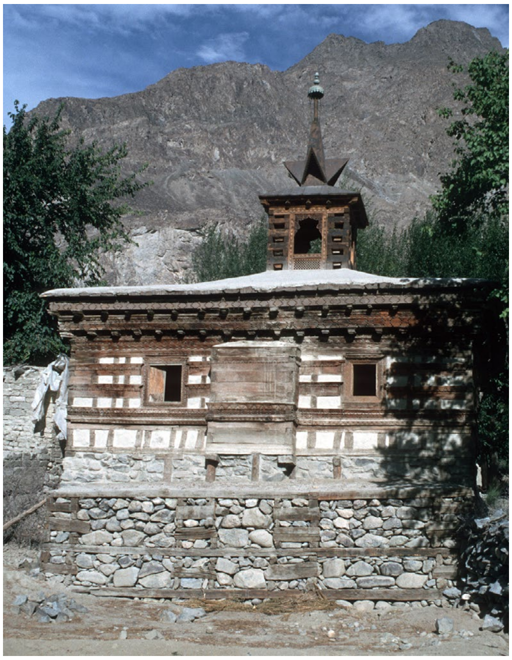


37.1 Old wooden mosque in the upper Thor valley.

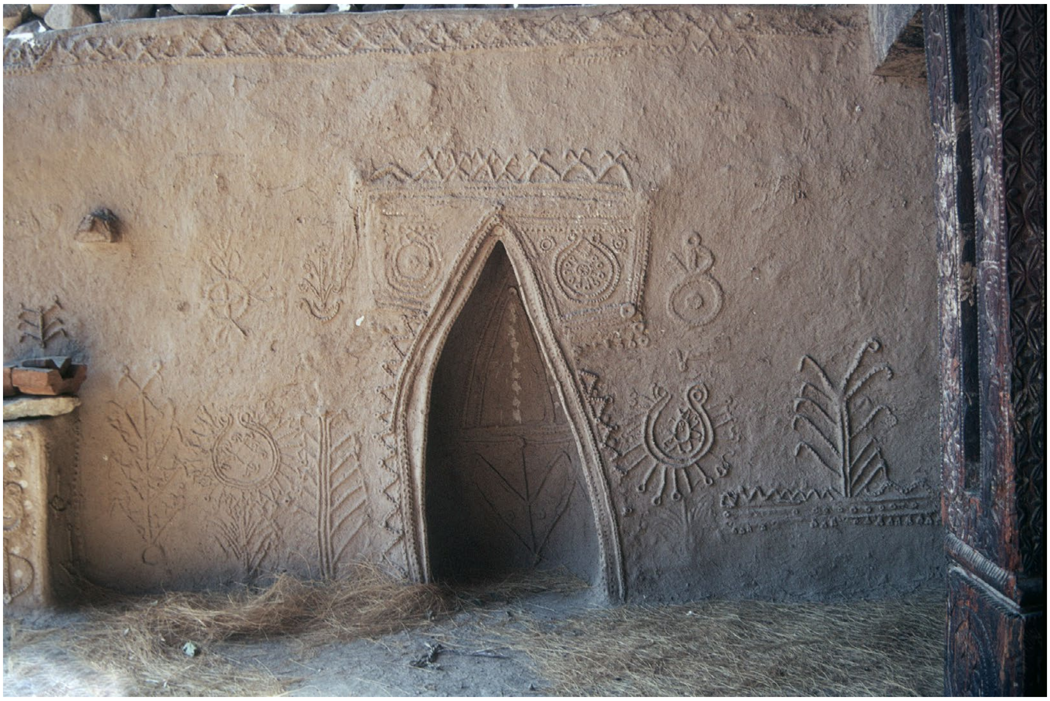


37.2 Capital within this mosque showing geometrical and floral patterns.

Table 38



38.1 The Amburiq mosque in Shigar, Baltistan; 14th century.



38.2 The mihrab of an old mosque in Seo, Baltistan, showing several auspicious symbols molded on the clay plastered wall.

With his authoritative monograph, *Lords of the Mountains. Pre-Islamic Heritage along the Upper Indus in Pakistan*, Harald Hauptmann brought decades of research in the Karakoram region of northern Pakistan to an impressive conclusion. In a sense, this book (completed before his sudden death in 2018) is the scientific legacy of the last phase of his career. The book was edited by Luca M. Olivieri of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, head of the ISMEO and Ca' Foscari's Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.

(after the foreword by H. Parzinger)

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